

Evaluation of All Our Kin Technical Assistance for Family Child Care Educators



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Executive Summary

Introduction

All Our Kin (AOK)—a national nonprofit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and sustaining family child care (FCC) educators—contracted with Child Trends, a nonprofit research organization focused on improving the lives of children and youth, to conduct an evaluation of their technical assistance (TA) offerings. The purpose of this work was to describe the implementation and outcomes of the TA approaches, along with recommendations for strengthening them. AOK offers TA in strengthening staffed family child care networks, and the development of the components of a network, including licensing support, business training, educational coaching, and policing advising. Each TA strand studied as part of this evaluation—business, network, and policy—had an individualized, mixed methods evaluation plan and set of research questions focused on implementation of TA activities and the successes, challenges, and outcomes related to implementation. Evaluation methods included qualitative interviews, surveys, document review, and TA observations.

Findings

Network development findings

Implementation of technical assistance

- Given the diversity of the teams, each team’s needs for building out their networks varied based on where they were in the process of developing or implementing a network and their organizational and regional contexts. However, common needs were funding support, building continuous quality improvement processes, and understanding what others have done previously to support FCC.
- Participants were very satisfied with the cohort and said that participating in the cohort increased their confidence in launching a SFCCN; most would recommend the cohort to others.
- Implementation supports included strong AOK facilitation, cohesive team relationships, and monies to support cohort participation.
- Between cohorts, AOK TA providers made deliberate efforts to elevate the voices of educators within their teams. On final surveys, educators in the second cohort reported increased engagement and that their expertise was valued by the team, compared to the initial cohort.
- Barriers included time limitations; meeting the needs with a wide range of experience, capacities, and participant resources; the cohort fee was also identified as a barrier to participation in the cohort, especially for people just starting out in the FCC field.

Measuring success/outcomes

- Cohort participants felt they understood the content delivered and felt prepared to apply the learning to their work.
- At the cohort’s initiation, teams indicated they were at varying stages of implementation—network exploration, network installation, and initial network implementation. All teams who participated in post-TA focus groups reported making progress on their stages of implementation across several areas of network development, with all teams reporting some or full implementation.

Business training findings

Implementation of technical assistance

- **Business Train-the-Trainer**
 - Between November 2020 and May 2023, AOK provided training to a total 195 trainers across 63 organizations in 22 different states.
 - Trainers who completed the training were highly satisfied with the Business Train-the-Trainer.
 - As reported by training recipients, the quality of the training content and activities and the knowledge and skill of the AOK trainers contribute to the success of the training.
 - Barriers to participating in the training included the time commitment needed to engage in the training and complete assignments and challenges with navigating the virtual training environment.
- **Business Series**
 - On average, trainers who provide a Business Series reach about 11 educators per year. Additionally, some organizations have multiple trainers – many of whom co-facilitate trainings – organizations as a whole reach an average of about 22 educators per year.
 - Trainers reported that drivers of successful implementation of the Business Series included the targeted community having a demonstrated need for the training, being able to provide the training virtually to reach more people and offering educators incentives for participation.
 - Barriers to providing the Business Series included the time commitment, technological challenges among Business Series participants, the cost of providing the Business Series, and the need to revise translated materials.
 - Much of the sustainability of the Business Series lies within the individual organizations who host the training. Trainers and organizations cited financial constraints as their main reason for not being able to present the Series.

Measuring success/outcomes

- Participants in the Business Train-the-Trainer showed significant improved knowledge about FCC operations after their participation, with trainers demonstrating a 16% improvement on their post-test scores on average.
- Almost all Business Train-the-Trainer participants felt prepared to teach the Business Series; fewer indicated that they knew how to track their own progress and success.
- Educators participating in the Business Series also demonstrated significant improvements in their knowledge of FCC business operations after completing the Series (with educators demonstrating a 19% improvement on their post-test scores on average), improved job satisfaction, more confidence in their technology skills, and more frequent peer support.
- Anecdotal evidence showed Business Series participants have obtained higher tax refunds and have decided not to close their businesses after participating in the Series.

Policy findings

Implementation of technical assistance

- Respondents were satisfied with the TA they received as part of the policy strand.
- Implementation supports included AOK facilitation and the relational nature of the cohort, which offered opportunities for key players to convene, to have honest dialogue, and to collaborate to advance the work.

- Barriers included time constraints; lack of clarity on team goals, roles, and/or action planning; a lack of comfort with fully participating in cohort discussions; and keeping stakeholders engaged.

Measuring success/outcomes

- About 75-80 percent of participants thought their team goals could be or were met.
- One team created a shared vision document articulating their wishes for FCC in the state alongside and policy agenda for FCC educators and shared the document with ten educators from their state family child care association for feedback.
- Another team worked on building FCC educator leaders in their county and held a virtual event for FCC educators and agencies to learn about the needs of FCC educators.
- At the end of the cohort period, most team members agreed that progress made toward their team goals would be sustained after the formal cohort ended. However, feedback was mixed about whether the teams adequately engaged in discussions about sustainability. Specifically, participants indicated a desire for more instruction about how to implement practices to support sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, we present strand-specific recommendations for network development, business training, and policy in the body of the report. We also present the following cross-strand recommendations:

1. Consider ways to strengthen the design of each cohort – both to allow for the flexibility to meet the needs of local communities and to strengthen tangible benefits to participants. While the specific recommendations vary depending on strand, generally consider allowing participants to offer trainings flexible in extended timelines and offer participants things such as certificates or professional credits for attending.
2. Promote the development of strong within-team relationships and the full engagement of all team members, particularly educators.
3. Explore relationships with institutes of higher education to provide certificates or continuing education units (CEUs) to help justify the TA fee and promote fuller engagement.
4. Continue efforts around TA sustainability, including fundraising to cover the costs for TA participation. Continue drawing on state, local, or philanthropic ECE-focused monies to support participation in AOK TA; for instance, drawing on federal dollars to fund FCC networks as a strategy to recruit and retain FCC educators.
5. Focus more intentionally on sustainability in trainings and meetings to help prepare participants to continue their efforts.

Introduction

All Our Kin (AOK)—a national nonprofit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and sustaining family child care (FCC) educators—contracted with Child Trends, a nonprofit research organization focused on improving the lives of children and youth, to conduct an evaluation of their technical assistance (TA) offerings. The purpose of this work was to describe the implementation and outcomes of the TA approaches, along with recommendations for strengthening them. AOK offers TA to strengthen staffed family child care networks, and to support the development of the components of a network, including licensing support, business training, educational coaching, and policing advising.¹

- **Network Development.** All of AOK’s TA is centered in building out of staffed family networks. A staffed child care network provides supports to FCC educators to promote professional development and connections among educators.² In Network development TA, AOK staff with deep expertise in direct implementation of staff FCC networks provide teams with coaching and tangible tools to launch and deepen holistic and responsive staffed family child care networks through AOK’s network. Centered in our [Critical Components](#) framework, AOK provides tailored support to agencies and communities to develop and launch staffed FCC networks, as well as other supports to strengthen the viability, quality, and sustainability of FCC. This work began in 2021.
- **Business Supports.** Through Business TA, AOK coaches partners to set up family child care educators for business success through a series of training and support. AOK’s Business Series Train-the-Trainer was first offered in 2017. The Train-the-Trainer includes five days of training (about 5.5 hours per day including lunch and breaks), ongoing coaching, and support to prepare staff at early childhood organizations to become trainers for FCC educators. Specifically, participants are trained to lead the Business Series, a comprehensive, 10-week course designed to build FCC educators’ knowledge and practice as business owners (see Box 1). The Business Series covers a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, creating contracts and policies for use with families, using marketing strategies to increase enrollment and earnings, and developing program budgets and tracking expenses and has resources available in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. In addition to the Train-the-Trainer

Overview of child care terminology used in this report

Organizations and agencies use different terminology to describe individuals who provide child care in home-based settings. Throughout this report, we use the term **Family Child Care (FCC)** and refer to those offering paid care as **Family Child Care educators** or simply “**educators**.” Our utilization of this language is in line with the preferred terminology of AOK. Other terms are also used to reference the practice of providing child care in a home environment including:

Home-based child care (HBCC): “HBCC can be divided into two main categories: providers who are listed and providers who are unlisted...Listed providers are paid directly by families or through subsidies and can be licensed, certified, or registered with a state...” Unlisted providers are typically not known to state and local systems and can be paid or unpaid.¹

Family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care: “Family, friend, and neighbor care is provided in the child’s or caregiver’s home by a person who is a relative, friend, or neighbor, or a babysitter or nanny. These providers are typically exempt from licensing and regulations.”¹ HBCC and FFN are less frequently in this report but appear in contexts where it is necessary to distinguish the individuals these terms describe.

¹ All Our Kin (n.d.). *Training and Advising for National Partners*. <https://allourkin.org/training-and-advising-for-national-partners>

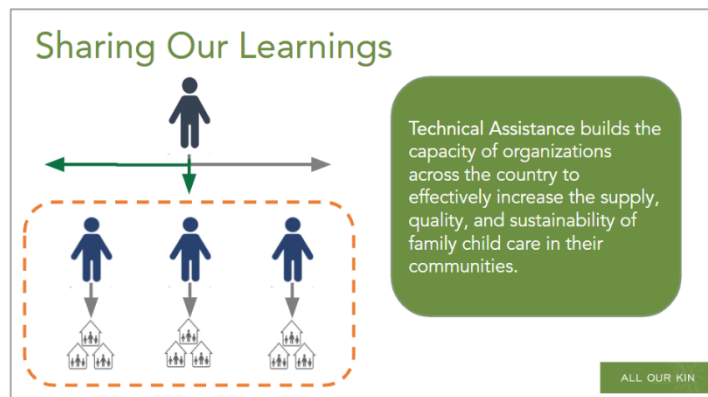
² All Our Kin (2020). *Staffed Family Child Care Networks: A Path Towards a Stronger, More Sustainable Child Care System*. https://allourkin.org/files/galleries/All_Our_Kin_Staffed_Family_Child_Care_Networks_Brief_FINAL.pdf

program, AOK offers virtual or in-person business coaching programs, thought partnership and strategic advising.

- **Educational Coaching.** Through Educational Coaching, AOK coaches collaborate with agency educational staff to develop their supportive practice with family child care educators through a variety of methods including short-term and long-term training, cohort-based technical assistance t, one-on-one and peer group formats. The support focuses primarily on strategies for delivering strength-based, relationship-focused coaching and professional development that centers equity. This strand began in 2017.
- **Licensing Support.** Licensing TA provides training, resources and planning tools, and advising to teams seeking to increase family child care supply and sustainability by creating their own licensing support program. This strand was piloted in 2019-2020 and formally launched in 2023.
- **Policy Advising.** Using AOK’s guiding framework for policy technical assistance, [Creating the Conditions](#), AOK provides individualized consultation and support to state and local leaders who want to implement FCC-friendly policies and practices in their communities. Through the Policy Advising TA, teams of state or local partners and FCC educators participate in individualized, team-based TA where they identify an issue or issues related to FCC in their community and develop plans to make progress on that issue. The first policy advising cohort began in 2020.

While each of the strands are individualized in their focus, they also intersect on content and an emphasis on ensuring supply, quality, sustainability, and equity; the achievement of positive outcomes for FCC educators and the families and children they serve; a strengths and relationship-based approach; and elevating educator leadership. This overlap, in combination with AOK’s overarching goals, results in a comprehensive program of support for FCC educators and interested parties in supporting FCC.

Figure 1. AOK Systems Approach to Technical Assistance



Importantly, AOK employs a systems approach to supporting FCC, which is evident in how the TA branches out to others in early childhood systems. For example, In the network development strand, AOK trains individuals who help develop a network that then provides support to educators. In the business training strand, AOK trains individuals who then train educators in their communities. For the policy strand, AOK trains individuals (e.g., early care and education system leaders, philanthropists, FCC educators, and others) who advocate for or work toward policy changes, which then impacts educators.

For this evaluation and report, we focus exclusively on the network development, business training, and policy strands. Prior to this evaluation, AOK commissioned several studies related to these strands and others.^{3,4,5,6,7} We refer to these prior evaluations throughout this report to provide additional context for the findings from this evaluation.

³ Lloyd, C.M. & Shaw, S. (2021). *All Our Kin Inaugural Policy Cohort: Final Report*. Myles Ahead.

⁴ Cross Sector Consulting (2019a). *All Our Kin Mentor Coaching Pilot: Final Evaluation Report*. Hamden, CT.

⁵ Cross Sector Consulting (2019b). *All Our Kin Hartford Family Child Care Technical Assistance Pilot: Year 2 Evaluation Report*. Hamden, CT.

⁶ Cristofaro-Cleary, T.N., Farrell Wright, M., & Crampton, A. (2019). *The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Family Child Care Support (FCCS) Pilot: End of Project Summary Report*. All Our Kin.

⁷ Cross Sector Consulting (2020). *All Our Kin Technical Assistance (TA) Model: Systematic Review of Evaluation Results and Reports*.

Prior Studies

The current and prior evaluations of AOK TA include a focus on assessing different aspects of the AOK logic model to understand AOK’s influence on longer-term educator and family outcomes that are more difficult to measure. Across these studies, the findings indicate that TA participants were highly satisfied with the TA they received, and improvements were observed in participant readiness and knowledge acquisition. There were also several examples of participants implementing improved practices or otherwise utilizing what they learned via TA participation to support FCC educators.

Prior evaluations also shed light on areas in which AOK could improve. Examples mentioned in at least one prior evaluation included: challenges regarding AOK’s understanding of participants’ local contexts prior to starting TA, participant desire for more TA content, the need for additional attention to planning for sustainability, and the desire for more information about ways to measure the impact of TA given its complexities and various levels of influence.

The report begins with an overview of the evaluation methodology, followed by findings and recommendations presented by strand (see Table 1). After presenting strand-specific information, we then summarize the findings and present recommendations that apply across all TA strands.

Table 1. Summary of strands as delivered in 2021-2023

Strand	TA Overview
Network Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eight to nine months of training/TA• Monthly (2022) or quarterly (2023) full cohort virtual meetings• Monthly individual team calls with AOK• Optional office hours• Provisions of resources (tools, templates, and examples)
Business Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business Train-the-Trainer cohorts offered multiple times per year (five 5.5 hour days of training)• Quarterly Business Train-the-Trainer Community of Learning (virtual meetings for trainers to connect with AOK mentor coaches and each other on different topics related to the Business Series)• Online community for Business Series trainers• Access to ongoing support from mentor coaches
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nine months of training/TA• Monthly full cohort calls to exchange ideas, develop and implement action plans and goals, and plan for sustainability• Individual team TA as needed/requested

Methodology

Each TA strand studied as part of this evaluation—business, network, and policy—had an individualized evaluation plan. This section summarizes the evaluation plans by presenting the research questions and data sources used for each strand. While each strand has slightly different research questions, they all have three key categories of focus: implementation, measuring success/outcomes, and sustainability. They are also examined using implementation science and principles of equitable evaluation⁸ which supports a nuanced

⁸ Principles of equitable evaluation include: (1) examining one’s own backgrounds and biases, (2) committing to digging deeper into data, (3) recognizing that the research process itself impacts people and communities, (4) engaging communities as partners in research and crediting them for their contributions, and (5) guarding against the implied or explicit

understanding of how the various phases of the TA unfolded as well as the overarching context. See Appendix A for a summary of the data sources used for each strand.

In addition to the strand-specific data collection processes, we also held one joint focus group with AOK staff who lead each of the strands to discuss and identify commonalities in topics, issues, and/or challenges across the strands.

Network Development

The research questions for this strand were:

Implementation: *How are TA strands implemented?*

- What is the composition of each cohort team?
- What are the needs of Network Development participants?
- How does implementation of the Network Development strand meet participant needs?
- Do all cohort team members feel that they are meaningfully contributing to meeting their teams' goal(s) to ensure/amplify their long-term involvement and promote equity?
- How do teams maintain fidelity to the Network Development framework after TA ends?

Measuring Success/Outcomes: *What are the key milestones of success?*

- What are the goals of each cohort team? Were their goals met?
- Does level of readiness to establish an FCC network change after participating in the cohort?
- Are partners reaching diverse communities of FCC educators?
- How are teams progressing along the network continuum over the course of TA?
- What indicators are they reaching during and after formal TA support?
- Are there barriers and facilitators to progressing along the network development continuum? How does AOK TA help teams make progress?
- What are tangible outcomes or successes associated with TA support?
- Are there any benefits to conducting TA as cohorts versus individually?
- Do teams experience “information overload” during TA delivery?
- What is needed to support the sustainability of outcomes within the Network Development strand?

Several data sources were used to answer these research questions, including review of team application materials and observation of a subset of cohort meetings (2021 cohort); initial, ongoing/midpoint, and final surveys (2021 and 2022 cohorts); and focus groups with interested cohort teams (2021 and 2022 cohorts).

Business Training

The research questions for this strand were:

Implementation: *How are TA strands implemented?*

- How can AOK improve implementation of the Business Train-the-Trainer?
- Were the Business Series sessions implemented as planned?
- What is the reach of the Business Train-the-Trainer?
- What is the reach of the Business Series?

assumption that white is the normative position (Parekh, J., Andrews, K., & Peckoo, S. (2019). *Five guiding principles for integrating racial and ethnic equity in research*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/five-guiding-principles-for-integrating-racial-and-ethnic-equity-in-research>). We also used tenets of equity impact assessments to shape the approach used for our evaluation (The Annie E. Casey Foundation (n.d.). *Racial Equity Impact Analysis: Assessing Policies, Programs, and Practices*. <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-raciaequityimpactanalysis-2006.pdf>).

- Who are the recipients of the Business Series, and how are they identified/recruited?
- Were Business Series sessions implemented as planned?
- What do trainers see as facilitators or barriers to implementing the Business Series?
- What do trainers see as barriers and facilitators to participating in the Train-the-Trainer program and delivering the Business Series?
- How does implementation of the Business Series vary by trainer?
- How can AOK create Business TA opportunities, such as the Business Train-the-Trainer, that are both effective and financially viable for AOK and participants?

Measuring Success/Outcomes: *What are the key milestones of success?*

- What are the key benchmarks of success for the Business Train-the-Trainer and Series? How can these benchmarks be measured?
- Do trainers’ knowledge of FCC operations change after participating in the Business Train-the-Trainer?
- Do trainers feel prepared to deliver the Business Series?
- Do educators’ knowledge of FCC operations change after participating in the Business Series?
- How has participating in the Business Institute changed trainers’ day-to-day practice?
- How satisfied are trainers with the Train-the-Trainer program?
- What are the tangible outcomes or successes associated with participating in the Business Series?
- What aspects of the Business Series are most useful? Are recipients satisfied with and learning from the Business Series?
- What is needed to support the sustainability of outcomes within the Business training strand?

Several data sources were used and analyzed by Child Trends to evaluate the Business training strand. They included surveys administered by AOK to participants in the Business Train-the-Trainer, including:

- Pre/post Assessment (administered on the first and last day, respectively)
- Daily Exit Slips (administered at the end of each day)
- Final Evaluation Survey (administered on the final day of the Train-the-Trainer)
- A small sample of interviews with trained trainers

Of the 195 Business Train-the-Trainer participants who began a training between November 2020 and May 2023, 181 completed each of these data collection instruments. Child Trends also analyzed all available Business Series survey data submitted by trainers as of December 31, 2023.

In addition to the survey data, Child Trends drew on meetings with AOK staff and conducted a limited set of observations of the Business Train-the-Trainer Community of Practice to inform the evaluation. Child Trends also facilitated interviews with trained trainers in the fall of 2023 and two focus groups with trainers who completed the Business Train-the-Trainer, one in May 2021 and the other in May 2022.

A note on calculating reach with Business Series data

Business Series data are collected by trained trainers who then share data with AOK. Because of this, the Business Series data offers a limited picture of the reach of the Series, in part due to challenges with obtaining Business Series data “downstream” from participants. This is a common challenge in train-the-trainer programs. Therefore, where possible, we provide data on the average number of participants per organization that offered the Business Series as a proxy to estimate the potential reach of Business Series delivery.

Policy

The research questions for this strand were:

Implementation: *How is the TA strand implemented?*

- What is the composition of each cohort team?
- Do team members receive organizational support to participate in the cohort?
- What TA support do team members receive? Is this TA helpful?
- Are teams engaging in a sustainability planning process? What factors promote sustainability planning for teams?

Measuring Success/Outcomes: *What are the outcomes of the policy cohort and how do they contribute to meaningful change for FCC-related policy?*

- What are the goals of the cohort team?
 - Are goals aligned with participants' organizational missions and day-to-day work?
 - Do goals elevate FCC perspectives?
 - Are goals achieved by the end of the cohort?
 - How do teams' end-of-cohort products or activities reach FCC educators or elevate FCC voice?

Like the other TA strands, Child Trends utilized multiple data sources for the evaluation of the policy cohort. This included reviewing teams' application materials; conducting meeting observations for each team at the beginning, middle, and end of the cohort; administering cohort surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the cohort; holding monthly meetings with AOK staff; and conducting interviews with two participants. (Initially Child Trends had planned to conduct two focus groups, one for each team, but due to a lack of response by cohort members, individual interviews were conducted).

Analysis

Across all strands, we descriptively summarized quantitative data (e.g., sums, averages) and conducted significance testing for pre-post measures with large enough samples to detect significant change. We summarized qualitative data with thematic analysis. Using an inductive approach, we generated a coding or categorization scheme from the available data sources and research questions and then systematically applied codes/categories to the data.

Findings and Recommendations

This section presents findings and recommendations parsed out by TA strand. Throughout this section, we use call-out boxes to share quotes from TA participants and key finding highlights. We also group key findings and recommendations into findings focused on implementation of TA and measures of success and outcomes related to TA.

Network Development

Implementation Findings

Background

AOK launched the inaugural network development cohort with teams including three to five members from October 2021-June 2022 (subsequently, the “2022 Cohort”). Teams were recommended to include at least one FCC educator on the team and to provide compensation to educators for their participation as well as accessible conditions (e.g., covering cost of substitutes, technology, transportation). This cohort was designed to help build capacity for the development of comprehensive, responsive networks reflective of AOK’s model. Over eight to nine months, AOK provided training about their outcome-based critical components while helping each team build a plan for the development of a network.

AOK launched a second cohort from January 2023-August 2023 (subsequently, the “2023 Cohort”). 2023 cohort teams included three to five members; inclusion of at least one FCC educator in current operation on the team was required. Teams were again strongly encouraged to provide compensation to educators for their participation as well as accessible conditions (e.g., covering cost of substitutes, technology, transportation). Cohort participation included full cohort meetings three times over cohort period, individual monthly meetings for each team, and optional office hours. Teams received access to over 30 tools, resources, templates, and examples to support network development.

Prior to these two cohorts, AOK had been providing network development TA in other ways. In Hartford, Connecticut, AOK provided intensive TA and support to help the city develop a network.⁹ The city ultimately received funding for the network and had 50 percent of all active, licensed Hartford FCC educators participating in the network. Enrollment in training was high and the educators developed and strengthened connections with one another. However, challenges around sustainability and funding arose. The prior evaluation of this effort recommended AOK do deeper assessments before working in a jurisdiction so they have a better understanding of the local context to help address barriers that may be encountered. In response to this recommendation, AOK now conducts team interviews and informal background assessments as part of the TA engagement process. This work also led to the development of a FCC Network Framework, which provides rich information about indicators for measuring the success of network development efforts. The remainder of this section presents findings from the inaugural Network Development cohort.

Team Composition

The applicants for the 2022 and 2023 cohorts were a diverse group representing different types of entities, participants in different roles, and teams in different stages of network development. Team members represented various organizations, including community organizations, funders, networks, provider leaders, state agencies, and child care programs.

Team Needs

Given the diversity of the teams, the needs of each team varied based on where they were in the process of developing or implementing a network. Some teams wanted to learn more about FCC and consider whether to implement a network, while other teams had a clear vision for their FCC network and had plans to put one into operation quickly.

⁹ Cross Sector Consulting (2019b)

Several needs, however, came up multiple times and are applicable across sites. Participants noted the importance of identifying funding to support their network development efforts. They also indicated a need for support in determining how to evaluate their work and set up continuous quality improvement processes. All teams wanted to better understand what others have done previously to support FCC, learn best practices, and make connections to individuals doing this work.

Participant Perspective

“AOK’s framework (even before the cohort) spoke to the work we wanted to do. It gave us grounding in the sea of data, reports, research, and articles that I had gathered to inform our work.”

Satisfaction

Overall, nearly all participants across both cohorts in initial and ongoing/midpoint surveys indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with facilitation of cohort meeting(s). In the final survey, most participants said they would recommend the cohort to others (85% of 2022 cohort; 64% of 2023 cohort).

Figure 2 provides more detailed responses about satisfaction from the initial survey administered at the end of the first cohort meeting for 2022 and 2023 cohorts. These data represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement. As the figure illustrates, most participants across both cohorts agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the cohort across a variety of dimensions, including knowing next steps, increasing knowledge, getting to know the AOK team and peers, understanding the activities that will be part of the cohort, and understanding the objective for the first cohort meeting. The largest difference between cohorts on individual satisfaction items was in participants’ self-reported knowledge of what a SFCCN is based on the meeting activities, with 91% agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2022 versus 69% agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2023. Because this item was worded to assess increase in knowledge resulting from meeting activities, it is possible that 2023 Cohort participants, many of whom already had contracts in place and had started on network development activities, were more knowledgeable at the beginning of the cohort compared to 2022 Cohort participants.

Figure 2. Percentage of Initial Survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement (2022, n=11; 2023, n=16)



Source: Network Development Initial Survey

When examining satisfaction with the cohort over time in ongoing surveys, most participants across both cohorts continued to report satisfaction across a variety of satisfaction indicators. Similar to initial survey results, there were some differences between 2022 and 2023 cohorts, with 2022 teams reporting a higher level of satisfaction than 2023 teams across most indicators. Figure 3 aggregates all ongoing monthly survey responses together for 2022 (no meaningful differences) and reports on the mid-point survey for 2023.

Figure 3. Percentage of Ongoing Survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement (2022, n=61; 2023, n=16)



Source: 2022 Cohort Network Development Ongoing Surveys (aggregated), 2023 Cohort Network Development Midpoint Survey

Lastly, on the final survey, respondents were again asked several questions related to satisfaction. Across both cohorts, over 90 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they thought that meetings with AOK allowed for active participation, provided the opportunity to learn from others, encouraged questions, provided an opportunity to share ideas, and included helpful activities. Over 90 percent of 2022 Cohort participants also agreed that resources provided by AOK during the cohort met their team’s needs and expectations and the cohort was worth the time they invested.

There were a few areas that were rated between 75-90 percent in satisfaction on the final survey. Of note, AOK worked to make changes to cohort implementation in 2023 to address the two areas identified, resulting in improved ratings in 2023.

In **2022**, these areas included:

- AOK facilitators encouraged discussion of centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (85%)
- Length felt appropriate (75%)

In **2023**, these areas included:

- AOK Network Development TA enhanced their professional development (77%)
- AOK Network Development TA provided opportunities to prepare to apply the Critical Components (79%)
- AOK Network Development TA resources met the team’s needs (79%) and helped build their network development plan (86%)

In addition, participants specified many aspects of the cohort that they particularly liked, including:

- Breakout groups with their team as well as with others not on their team; the pace and flow of the meetings; and how individual team meetings provided the opportunity to ask questions, set next steps, dive more deeply into topics, and walk through tools and other resources together
- How accessible and helpful the AOK staff were
- Learning what other teams were doing and learning about the other TA strands

On the final survey, participants were also asked whether they used a number of AOK resources provided to them during TA. Participants first reported whether they had read/reviewed the resource, and if so, to rate on a 0-10 scale how helpful the resource was to them and how they used it or planned to use it. When asked about specific resources, participants reported some resources were reviewed by more than others. For example, all or nearly all final survey respondents in both cohorts indicated they read or reviewed:

- AOK's Family Child Care Network Framework
- AOK's Core Values
- Landscape Scan and Needs Assessment Tool
- Theory of Change Logic Model Template
- Sample job descriptions
- Slide decks from cohort meetings
- Notes from individual team meetings

Across all resources, in 2022, average helpfulness ratings were between 8-9 out of 10. There was somewhat more variability in helpfulness ratings in 2023. Among resources that were read and reviewed by at least half of 2022 cohort participants, the AOK Values (n=12) and FCC Network Framework resources (n=11) were most often rated as highly helpful (rating of 8-10 out of 10); the Recruitment Tip Sheet (n=6) and the Educator Coach Cycle resources (n=5) were least often rated as highly helpful.

While the feedback about the network development TA cohort was generally positive, participants also shared some suggestions for improvement in open-ended survey items, many of which were responded to and improved in the 2023 cohort. Themes from the 2022 responses are detailed below.

The desire for more time to explore topics more fully, for additional small group/breakout group activities, and to discuss site-specific questions. Following the 2022 cohort, AOK made adjustments to give teams more time to meet and allow for deeper discussions in individual team meetings. AOK also started implementing more breakout groups midway through the current cohort. Participants also suggested longer breaks or more frequent, shorter breaks, which were incorporated in 2023. One participant in the 2022 cohort reported appreciating additional break out time, stating, *“I appreciated having more breaks after that first set of cohort meetings. So many of us are on meetings all day long and I loved that you listened to feedback and allowed more off-screen time. You all have been so warm and giving and are genuinely passionate about what you do and it shines through in every way!”*

Streamlining access to written resources. Participants stated that they wanted more written guidance and support around action planning. In 2022, some participants noted they had challenges with Jamboard and using Google to access materials, so they recommended changes to make the technology (and resources) more accessible. Following the 2022 cohort, AOK began using different software to address this issue. Access to resources did not come up in the 2023 surveys as an identified challenge. Three participants commented that providing a deep dive overview into *how to apply* the resources would be helpful; for context, TA providers indicated that deep dives were offered and provided during individual team meetings for three teams on specific resources (i.e., on staffing plans and theory of change). It is possible that some team members may not have been present, or that they wanted additional time for these deep dives or on different topics.

Wanting changes to the pace and structure of meetings. Participants had varying feedback regarding meeting time and structure; some participants said they thought the pace of the cohort was too slow, while others thought less frequent, shorter meetings were preferable. FCC educators shared that all-day virtual meetings are challenging to attend when they are caring for children and suggested shorter meeting days.

Additionally, following the 2022 cohort, focus group interviews were conducted with teams to ask about implementation supports and barriers. Themes of key highlights from these interviews are detailed below. In 2023, focus group interviews focused on measuring success/outcomes, which are presented in the subsequent sections.

Implementation supports. Respondents mentioned several participant, facilitator, and/or contextual factors that aided in the implementation of the strand including:

- Strong facilitation by AOK staff
- Cohesive team relationships and having an ongoing/prior relationship with AOK
- Monies to support cohort participation

Implementation barriers. Respondents mentioned other participant, facilitator, and/or contextual factors that hindered implementation of the strand including:

- Time limitations and scheduling difficulties made it difficult to participate and maintain progress
- Challenges providing content that was applicable to everyone at the same time since teams were in different phases of implementation and had different needs and previous experiences
- Challenges with educator engagement given how hard it was for educators to participate during the workday and because some teams did not engage educators as thoughtfully as they could have

Measuring Success/Outcomes

Level of Readiness to Apply Core Components of Network Development

On the final survey, respondents were asked the extent to which they were familiar with each of the strand components before the cohort began, and then were asked the extent to which they understand and feel ready to apply the component at the end of the cohort. All respondents across both cohorts said they understood each component more at the end of the cohort than they did at the beginning. All respondents in both cohorts also indicated they either understood each component, felt ready to apply it to their work, or both. In the 2023 cohort, the most common component participants indicated they understood but were not ready to apply was *Holistic and Responsive Programming* (n=4), followed by *Supportive Funding and Policies* (n=3)

Participant Perspective

“We feel confident and capable and that is due in large part to the time we spent in this [cohort experience]. Thank you so very much, we are grateful.”

On the final survey participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed with various statements about readiness. Nearly all participants across both cohorts agreed that their confidence in the team’s ability to launch and sustain a FCC network increased and the resources provided by AOK helped their team build their network development plan. Nearly all 2022 cohort participants said that cohort meetings helped them prepare to apply the critical components, while about three-fourths of 2023 cohort participants agreed with this statement. Fewer, but still over three-fourths of respondents in both cohorts, agreed that participating in the cohort enhanced their professional development. See Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents on Final Survey who agreed or strongly agreed with each readiness statement (2022, n=13; 2023, n=14)

Statement	2022	2023
Participating in the cohort increased my confidence in my team’s ability to launch and sustain a family child care network.	92%	93%
Participating in the cohort enhanced my professional development.	77%	79%
Resources provided by AOK helped my team build our network development plan.	100%	86%
In general, meetings provided me with the opportunity to prepare to apply the critical components shared during the session.	92%	79%
Meetings with AOK provided me with opportunities to prepare to apply the critical components learned in full cohort meetings to my team’s specific work.	92%	79%

Source: Network Development Final Survey

Stage of Implementation

Another way to measure participant progress is by comparing implementation progress at the beginning of the cohort to the end. In applications, the teams indicated they were at varying stages of implementation—network exploration, network installation, and initial network implementation. In the final survey, some respondents indicated they were at a later stage of implementation (such as “full implementation”) than at the beginning of the cohort. However, others indicated in the final survey that their team was at an earlier stage of implementation than at the start of the cohort. This finding may be because participants had a better understanding of the implementation stages and/or reevaluated their goals. We revised the evaluation method for assessing stage of implementation in 2023 to include a more robust rating tool administered during team focus group discussions.

Progress on Network Development Indicators

Because of the challenges with summarizing progress on network development indicators via survey, as noted above, in 2023, AOK and Child Trends developed a Network Development Continuum Rating Tool to administer during focus group interviews with teams to better capture details and contexts for team progress. In August-October 2023, AOK and Child Trends co-conducted focus groups with participants (n=20) from six teams: two from the 2022 cohort and four from the 2023 cohort. The goal of the focus groups was to gain a deeper understanding about teams’ progress toward implementing a SFCCN, including barriers and facilitators to progress over time. AOK and Child Trends co-lead the discussions, using the Network Development Continuum Rating Tool (described below), and a semi-structured interview guide.

The Network Development Continuum Rating Tool was developed to help teams rate their stages of implementation across four domains: (1) Staffing; (2) Recruitment and Engagement; (3) Service Delivery and Implementation; and (4) Funding. AOK and Child Trends reviewed and co-developed indicators for each implementation level in alignment with key resources from the [National Center for Early Childhood Quality Assurance](#); [HOME GROWN and the Erikson Institute](#); and the [AOK Critical Components](#). We initially utilized four implementation phases to help teams rate their progress; however, in the initial focus group, an

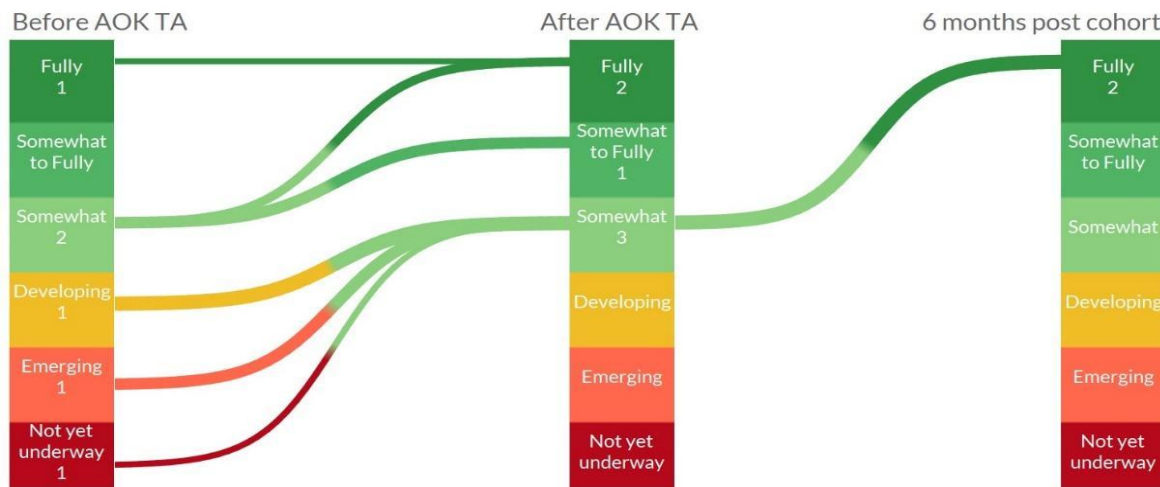
intermediary step between no activity and developing/planning was identified by the team, which we called the “emerging” phase. Final ratings included the following five stages, each with corresponding indicators: (1) Not yet underway/not planned; (2) Emerging; (3) Developing (planning phases); (3) Somewhat; (4) Fully/completed. Teams were asked to review the indicators and come to a consensus rating at two (2023 cohort) or three (2022 cohort) time points: (1) before TA with AOK began, (2) immediately after TA, and (3) for **2022 cohort teams only**, six months post-TA (i.e., at the time of the interview). Team ratings across the four domains are described in subsequent figures and text.

Across domains, teams began the cohort in various stages of implementation, ranging from *not yet underway* to *fully implemented*. **Overall, all teams had progressed to somewhat or fully implemented across staffing, recruitment and engagement, service delivery and implementation, and funding by the end of the TA cohort period or within 6 months of the cohort ending, with one exception;** one team indicated that while they had secured funding for their network by the end of the cohort, they were still developing plans for long-term sustainable funding sources.

Domain 1: Staffing

Teams reported a wide range of starting places on staffing prior to participating in AOK Network Development TA, ranging from ‘not yet underway’ to ‘fully staffed’. Rates of teams’ progress on staffing varied over the course of TA, but all teams were *somewhat* (n=2) or *fully implemented* (n=4) on staffing at the time of the interviews. Both inaugural cohort teams continued their progress and had reached full implementation at six months post-TA (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Team ratings of staffing implementation over the course of AOK TA



One team member described their progress during AOK TA moving from discussions to action, stating, “I have seen the shift from the network being an idea to starting to do it.” Among the teams who were not fully implemented at the time of interviews, one team shared that they experienced contract delays during their participation in the cohort but had made significant progress and were nearly fully staffed six months post-cohort. Another team reported that they centered equity and engagement in their staffing approach and intentionally took additional time to hire a community engagement director who would engage various areas of the community; because they focused primarily on hiring this role first, initial staffing progress for other positions was delayed. However, they were approaching a fully staffed network at six months post-cohort. One participant from this team explained, “having team members that represent the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our communities is not optional. Recruiting a community engagement and outreach director was the most important hire and was the reason that hire was made first.” Although all teams had a desire to focus on equity and cultural responsiveness in staffing, only one team provided concrete examples of

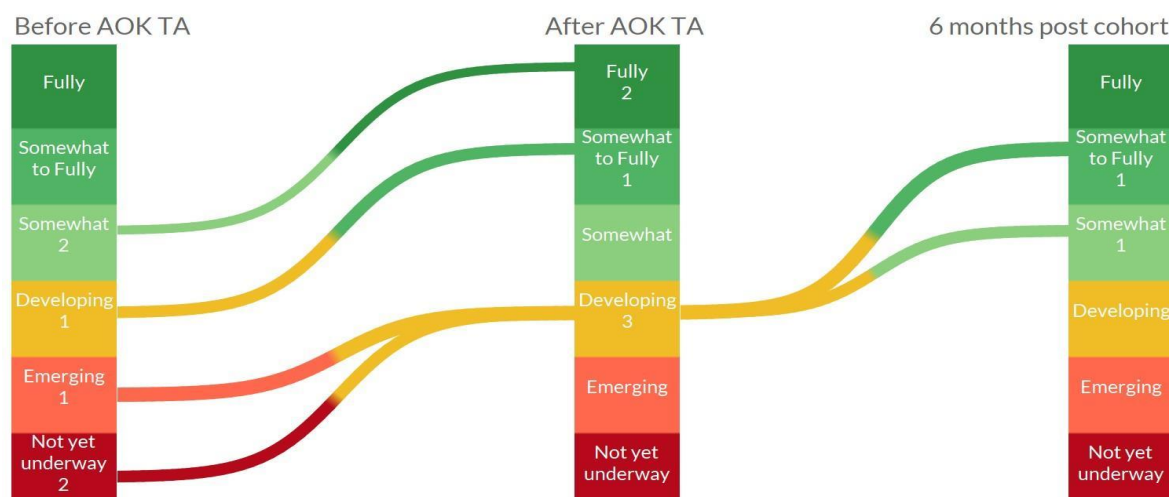
centering equity in their staffing activities. Most other teams had not yet focused on equity and cultural responsiveness beyond translation of materials.

Staff with FCC Experience. Several sites talked about the importance of not only having adequate numbers of staff, but also having staff with family child care (FCC) expertise and building that expertise into the organization’s onboarding and training. One team highlighted that although they were still working towards full implementation on staffing generally, they had increased the number of staff who were well versed in family child care; this included four dedicated coaches, two of whom were focused primarily on network development. Multiple teams also identified that centering their focus on FCC educator needs helped them increase staffing in a shorter period. For example, one team shared, “we doubled or tripled our numbers in a short amount of time. We believe it was taking [educators] out, having guest speakers, [helping them] feel appreciated outside of the home and network with others outside of the home. Word of mouth was powerful and spending time together networking so we could discuss challenges, opportunities, and not reinventing the wheel.”

Domain 2: Recruitment and Engagement

Before TA began, teams varied in their level of implementation of recruitment and engagement strategies, ranging from *not yet underway* to *somewhat implemented*. All teams progressed along the continuum during TA, with all teams being in a stage of active *planning* (n=3) or *implementation* (n=3) immediately after TA. Both 2022 cohort teams continued to progress on recruitment and engagement activities after AOK TA ended, being *somewhat* to *fully implemented* at six months (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Team ratings of recruitment and engagement implementation



When reflecting on what helped teams progress across the continuum on recruitment and engagement, team members highlighted several factors that facilitated movement toward full implementation, which are described below.

Centering Relationship Building. Two teams identified relationship building as a key ingredient toward full implementation of recruitment and engagement practices. One team talked about hiring a “trust building person” – a community ambassador -- as part of their staff and partnering with organizations who have already earned the trust of communities as being central strategies for engaging educators. For example, a team member explained that relationships are at the heart of their recruitment and engagement work, saying, “we reflect who we serve. It is organic, and that is why we have been so successful. It doesn’t feel like work because it’s something we really believe in and individually are really good at, so when we come together it’s great.” Another team member said that the creation of the community ambassador position reflected that

“our philosophy is getting the right person and taking time to find that person. It is an all consuming job because of the effort we put in to relationship-building. It requires the right person.” Other teams stated that leveraging relationships to disseminate information was also critical, such as word of mouth to expand their network naturally, and statewide recruitment campaigns with common messaging around connection and growth. Relatedly, incorporating educator voice into recruitment and network development was also a key strategy; one team included a FCC educator for each region across the state in their quarterly meetings and monthly training plans.

Previous Experience with FCC and/or TA. When reflecting on their successes with recruitment and engagement, two teams talked about the “readiness” of organizations to receive TA services from AOK and apply the TA learnings quickly toward recruiting and engaging educators. One team identified that having previous experience in FCC and having established roles at their organization allowed them to move toward recruitment implementation quickly. A team member reflected, “we weren’t starting from a space of using the TA as an introduction to our roles – that’s what made it different for our team. We could go and implement quicker because we were already deeply entrenched in our roles.” Another team talked about their previous TA experience with another child care organization, and how this experience helped them to make progress quickly on recruitment and engagement during the AOK TA process. By the time they started AOK TA, the team already had a good understanding of what a SFCCN is and already had staff in place. This team also had a state mandate with a timeline attached to funding to get a network up and running, which pushed them to make progress even further.

Use of AOK TA Tools. One team discussed the utility of the TA and tools provided by AOK in helping them to develop structured, manageable steps towards developing recruitment and engagement strategies. One team member explained, “we shrunk the field so we felt more successful and think more clearly. It was a 5,000 piece puzzle, but we focused on a small section. We didn’t even know where to begin...we had no true guidance about what this could even look like, which is why we found All Our Kin. The information coming before was not matching reality.” In particular, TA on developing and reviewing their logic model was identified as a useful guide for developing their network and referencing as they progressed through the various phases of planning and implementation.

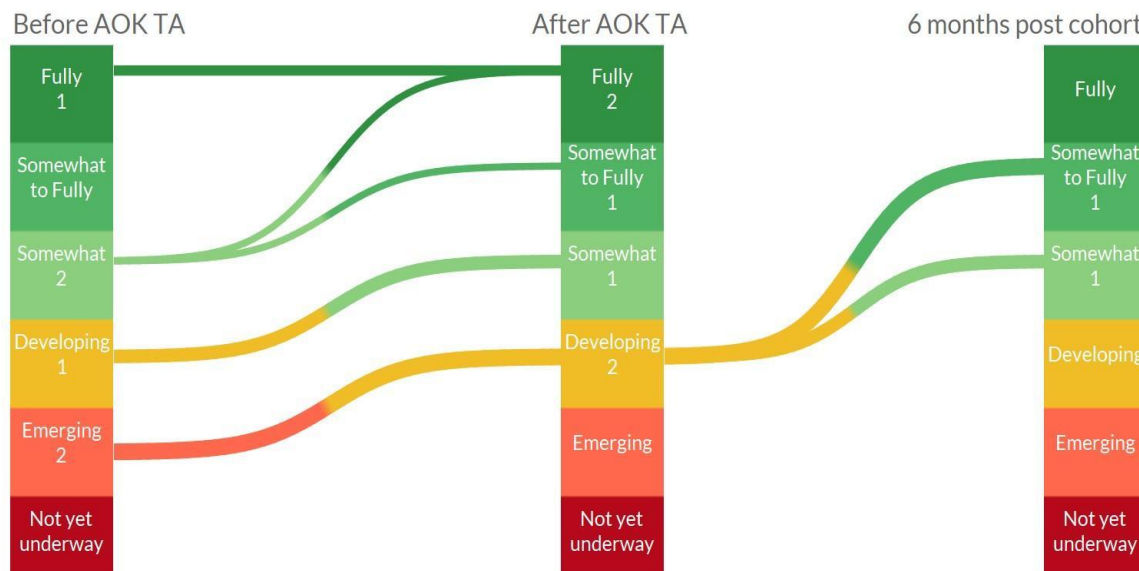
Challenges. Teams also mentioned a few barriers that negatively impacted their recruitment and engagement efforts. One team talked about the time of year when TA started (January) contributing to slower progress because by the time they were ready to implement new activities or practices, there were only a few months left in the school year. Once the team resumed activities in July, progress came more quickly. This team shared that they grew from 34 active individuals in their network before TA began to 60 individuals after TA. Another team talked about the challenges of recent organizational transitions (i.e., centralizing regulatory/licensing offices to one location) and the flexibility and openness of the network framework they developed in the AOK cohort. Team members reported that recruiting providers posed some challenges because less experienced providers often preferred standardized guidance for defining their network, whereas the approach developed through AOK TA resulted in a more open, flexible framework that can be tailored to local contexts. New providers were not comfortable or confident with this open approach.

Domain 3a: Service Delivery and Implementation: Training (Part 1)

For service delivery and implementation, teams rated themselves on progress in two parts. Part 1 focused on describing the types of trainings, based on content, offered by the networks. This sub-domain included the core areas of work that the AOK networks focus on - business supports, early childhood education support, licensing support, and accreditation support. Part 2 focused on describing the ways in which services are provided. It included indicators for responsiveness to educator needs, scheduling flexibility, and flexibility around modality of services.

On Part 1, before TA began, teams varied from *emerging* to *fully implemented*. Immediately after TA, all teams had progressed along the continuum and most were *somewhat* or *fully implemented* (n=5). The 2021 cohort teams continued to progress on the continuum, being *somewhat* to *fully implemented* by six months (see Figure 6). When describing their success progressing on service delivery and implementation, one team said, “At the beginning, there were some supports and trainings that existed, but some were not known or too advanced, so the network brought that together. By the end [of AOK TA], we had a synthesized idea of what we’d like to see and had a sense of what we’d like to offer through the network sites and implementation.” Another team similarly described the network as being the “glue” to connect various trainings and supports for educators by creating a one-stop shop that educators were aware of. A team member described, “the network has allowed us to create a hub – a trusted partner – to go to. We had all these ‘bubbles’ across the state with no way to connect them. Now, with the network we are able to be a stationary object and bring those resource ‘bubbles’ to educators...we are definitely further along and able to connect educators to what they need.”

Figure 6. Team ratings of service delivery and implementation (part 1)



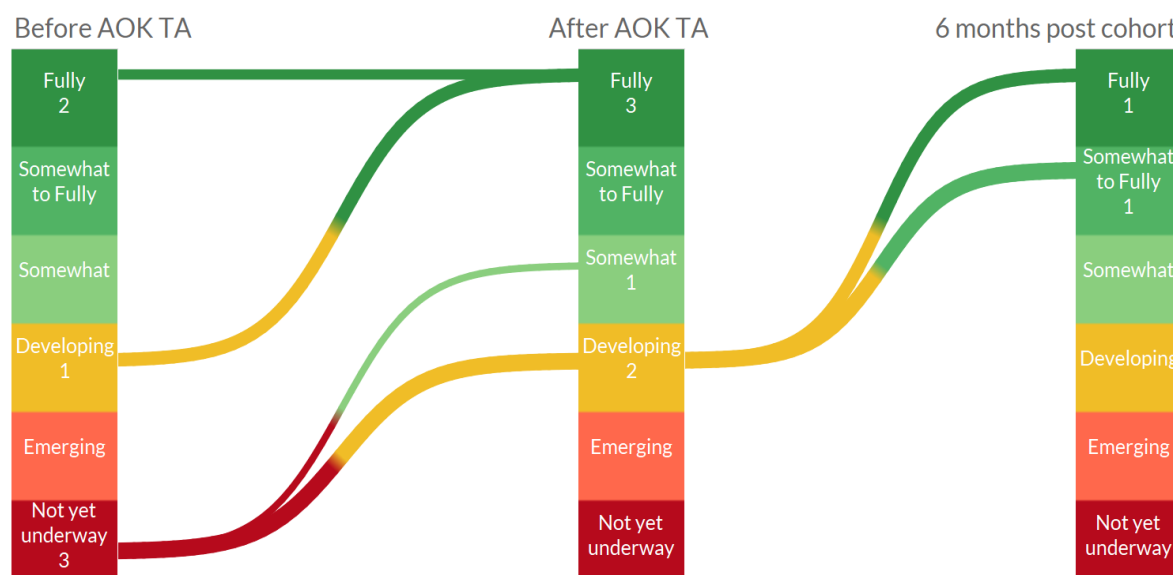
Accreditation and Pre-Licensing Challenges and Supports. Three teams that had progressed to implementation during and after the cohort period talked about accreditation support being a lingering challenge to full implementation because of organizational regulations and standards (e.g., academic approval requirements, challenges FCC educators face in meeting accreditation requirements). One team member shared, “we only had fewer than 30 at one point who were licensed in the metro area because of [accreditation] challenges. Getting people to accreditation is very challenging. There is not a state or city-sponsored support network, so we have to develop it ourselves, which takes a longer time. We need licensing agency support, and it’s still a struggle.” One team shared several examples of accreditation supports that are available, but only for academically approved educators; many FCC educators view the requirements for academic approval to be too burdensome to pursue and are thus unable to access resources available to other educators. One team described progress they had made with accreditation and licensing through supports they provided as the CCR&R agency, as well as a accreditation quality ambassador training through the National Association for Family Child Care. These teams also highlighted that they offer tailored trainings and supports for Spanish speaking educators to get licensed. Two additional teams highlighted supports they have in place for educators at pre-licensing. One team employs two coaches that overlap with pre-licensing, so the coaches are able to support educator transition into the network seamlessly. Another team provides

pre-licensing kits to FCC educators so they are aware of licensing standards and have access to tools and supports for licensure.

Domain 3b: Service Delivery and Implementation: Direct Services (Part 2)

On Part 2, before TA began, half of the teams were *not yet underway* with service delivery and implementation activities, which was the highest number across all domains of the continuum. One team was in the *developing/planning* phase, and two teams were already *fully implemented*. Immediately after TA, all teams had progressed along the continuum, with two teams moving into *developing/planning* (n=2), and others being *somewhat* (n=1) or *fully implemented* (n=3). The 2022 cohort teams continued to progress after TA ended, with one team being *somewhat to fully* implemented and another being *fully* implemented by 6 months (see Figure 7). One team who was not yet underway before AOK TA but made significant progress shared, “we understood these [indicators] as best practice, but we did not have formal spaces to do it. We are working on a parallel project during the cohort focused on data collection and sharing with early childhood councils. We have shared goals in general because of statutory mandates but have been able to do a better job about what their impact and efforts look like, and it’s only getting better.”

Figure 7. Team ratings of service delivery and implementation (part 2)



One team was already providing TA and coaching to educators, including professional development seminars and workshops and meetings for networking and sharing of information about FCC educators. Over the course of AOK TA, the team shared that professional development activities are better organized and streamlined, and that there is a targeted focus on FCC educators, getting feedback on offerings through surveys and focus groups, and relaying further concerns or needs through the state department of education. Another team similarly described their longstanding success with Saturday training offerings, which were supported by travel and hotel funds to increase participation. This team reflected that educators are motivated to attend trainings because they appreciate networking and peer support/relationship-building opportunities, particularly among Spanish-speaking providers. The network also provides gifts at trainings to help educators feel appreciated.

AOK TA and Tools. One team who had progressed from not yet underway to somewhat to fully implemented discussed applying the information and tools provided by AOK to help them make progress by shifting to an educator-centered approach and meeting educators where they are. AOK provided substantial support for the team to test out creative strategies, such as providing food and sharing meals with educators, providing

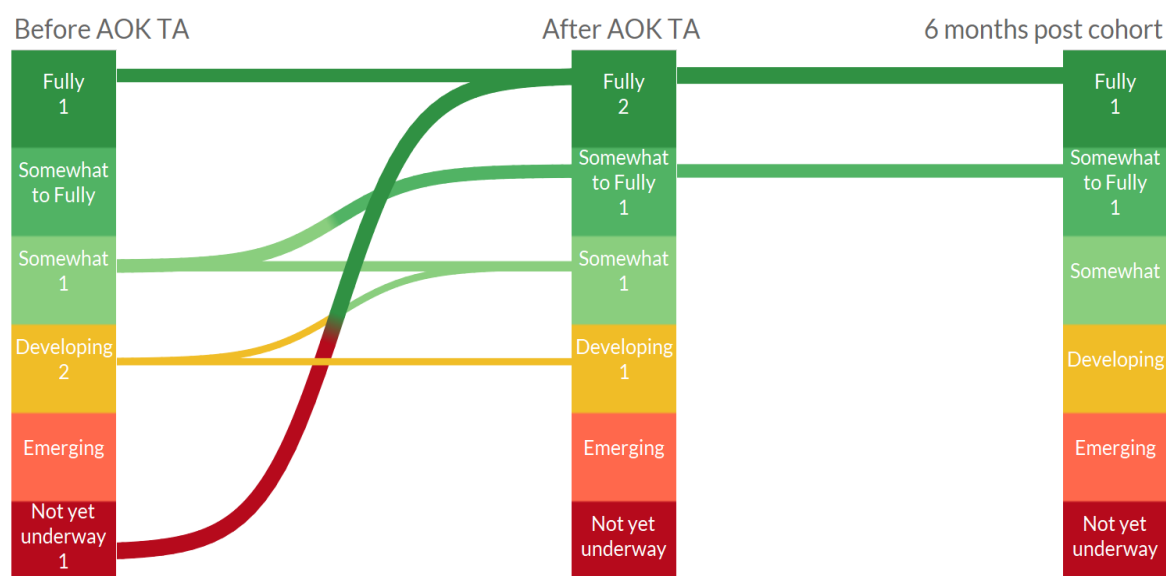
child care for educators’ own children to be able to attend trainings, and including educators in planning and decision-making on offerings. The team felt that their organizational values about relationship building were reflected in AOK’s TA, and that the relational focus and FCC experience of AOK helped them make progress.

Collaboration and Feedback Loops. One team that also serves as the state CCR&R described new and deeper partnerships between the network and other organizations allowed them to develop a system for assigning coaches, handling caseloads, and scheduling visits. The team was able to build mechanisms for collaborating with other TA providers and agencies who are also working with the same educators so they were aware of the full spectrum of supports being offered to educators and could collaborate rather than duplicate services. Another team similarly described the importance of leadership and collaboration at the state level, and how the state’s approach to engaging with educators trickles down to service delivery. A team member described, “as an office at the state level, we have also gotten new leadership and that has made a big impact. We are focused on relationship building at contracting because everyone sees how we are interacting, and that makes a big difference. It is difficult to have people who want to build relationships and we are supporting those people, [if] we aren’t making relationships an important value in our work. It’s hard to expect them to do something we aren’t doing.”

Domain 4: Funding

On funding, teams rated themselves across the full range of the continuum before AOK TA, from *not yet underway* to *fully implemented*. Immediately after TA, all teams had progressed within or moved into *developing/planning* activities (n=1) or *somewhat to fully implemented* (n=5). The 2022 cohort teams remained at *somewhat to fully* or *fully implemented* but noted that they continued to make small progress after TA ended to identify and secure long-term, stable funding sources for their networks (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Team ratings of sustainable funding implementation



Funding Advocacy and AOK TA. One team described having to proactively advocate for funding and remind state agencies and funders that FCC is in need of funding, and that FCC educators are doing the same work as centers. Another team described how their affiliation with AOK led to more successful advocacy of funds, resulting in a multi-million dollar, multiyear funding stream to run the network. A team member explained, “in the pitch we said that we were being trained by AOK. We were engaged with AOK throughout the whole process and they supported us. Our program was in its infancy, and to be able to say we were getting TA from an organization like AOK helped us to get that funding...we put AOK in that [proposal] and had people

researching AOK because either you're a child care person or you're not. They knew we had support, and that gave [the] council the confidence to give us such a loft award." Securing these funds not only allowed the network to continue running, but also provided a mechanism to provide financial support directly to educators. A team member described the impact of that financial assistance on the daily lives of educators, "we drove to the bank with women providers to cash their checks, and it was one of the best experiences I had in 30 years of child care. They were crying. They had never been invested in before to that level, to do the things they wanted to do."

Braiding and Blending Funds. Other teams described braiding and blending strategies they used to leverage stable funding for their networks, including sources such as ARPA dollars, state legislated funding for FCC, preschool development grants, universal pre-kindergarten funding, and other stimulus/relief funds at the state level. One team described the benefit of having the network written into the state plan for Child Care Development Block Grant funding, making that source of funding mandatory and secure. However, the team noted that they did not think about small but important expenses that federal funds could not cover, such as providing food at events for educators, so they continue to identify supplemental sources of funding through partnerships with CCR&R and local businesses and organizations.

General Feedback on TA Process

Teams talked about the timing of when they received AOK TA. Generally, multiple teams thought that having some foundational work completed prior to TA helped them make the most of the experience. One team shared that they had engaged with FCC educators for about six months prior to TA, so they had an idea of what they wanted to focus the TA on and map out a plan. Specifically, this team thought AOK's TA tools helped them break down their goals into manageable objectives. "All the tools from AOK helped give us a voice, and the individual team meetings helped us pick things apart because we were very different than other teams; but the big network helped us learn from others and apply it to our work." Several teams specifically identified the logic model activities facilitated by AOK as particularly useful. Conversely, another team who was further along in their journey conversely felt that they had to go back and repeat activities they had already completed using AOK's framework. The team felt that some meetings felt repetitive and did not help them progress on their goals because they were further along than other teams in their cohort, and the AOK model did not allow for that flexibility. Other teams had the opposite experience, noting the relational approach AOK took to TA delivery. One team member shared, "I really appreciate the passion. It wasn't just a box to check or a way to get money. It was more about spreading the knowledge and helping to support people across the country." Relatedly, several teams said that they appreciated that AOK continued to offer additional support after the formal cohort ended, and that ongoing TA support was a unique service compared to other organizations and offerings. Logistically, some teams shared suggestions of allowing more people on cohort teams to represent additional voices, shortening or streamlining virtual TA sessions, and reducing the length of time between all-cohort meetings to maintain progress.

Some teams also expressed a desire to learn from other teams who had already been through the process as to not reinvent the wheel, and to have some of those learnings shared in advance. A team member said, "when you have networks across the country who have a desire to make change coming together collectively with creative thinking, those landscapes begin to shift because we might take something away from that one person...in that perspective, great minds think alike and the landscape begins to shift. I really enjoyed being involved in those platforms and sitting back and really learning."

When reflecting on what teams were most proud of as a result of their participation in AOK TA, several teams spoke about applying TA learnings to their meetings with educators. One team member shared, "I was most proud of how well our team implemented the monthly meetings. The team was giving up their Saturdays, but even those who were most hesitant to commit have all come back and said how right it was and how amazing the impact was. They've figured out how to share it with colleagues. Just watching them dig deep and make it

happen and listening to their testimonies of providers feeling appreciated, loved, and respected. We've been able to sit in on region meetings and see the relationships develop with tears of joy. It is truly the network we wanted to see happening." Another team member similarly shared, "facilitating Spanish speaking meetings was very rewarding, seeing the relationship building and inspiration from each other to become leaders. They are already thinking about going to NAFCC and presenting; that is my goal, to build their leadership skills. They felt the respect and value, and I always notice they want to help each other instead of competing. It inspired me to keep giving to them because they want to give to others."

Recommendations

Based on these findings, recommendations for future Network Development TA implementation span several of the topical categories: strand structure, relationships, funding, and content and resources.

1. Consider whether to group teams in future cohorts by stage of implementation and/or other common characteristics. This could help address some of the challenges faced around providing content that was applicable across teams, particularly for teams who may be further along in their network development journey. Grouping teams could enable the group to explore topics more deeply if some topics are of greater relevance to the entire group.
2. Continue to build out implementation strategies that allow for deep application of learnings to site-specific contexts. These approaches may include restructuring of full group vs. individual group meetings, the use of breakouts, and individual team TA models.
3. Continue to implement strategies for enhancing engagement of educators in the cohort, which resulted in positive feelings of educator engagement in the 2023 cohort. Some of these specific strategies have included: clarifying that the team lead is expected to facilitate educator engagement, providing more guidance on how to effectively engage educators, and promoting the recruitment of educators to teams.
4. Consider a more detailed focus on sustainability and funding, including funding to support equitable access to the TA. Many teams were concerned about ongoing funding and/or sustainability for their networks; it may be helpful for the cohort to spend more time providing guidance on sustainability plans early in the cohort.

Business Training

Implementation Findings

Business Train-the-Trainer

Background. The Business Train-the-Trainer is designed to prepare staff from early childhood organizations to provide the Business Series training to FCC educators. The Train-the-Trainer is currently delivered in a virtual format over the course of five days with daily five and a half-hour sessions and pre-work, totaling 34 hours of cumulative training. AOK offers this Train-the-Trainer program in cohorts several times throughout the year, with approximately 20-25 people participating per cohort. Organizations apply to send their staff, and the cost of participation has varied over time. It cost \$1,000 to attend in November 2020, \$2,500 to attend in May or June of 2021, and \$2,600 to attend in January 2022, \$3,300 per person in October 2022, and \$3,500 per person in March 2023 (and as of the date of this report).

The Business Train-the-Trainer has been offered ten times as of January 2024 – in addition to a special Business Train-the-Trainer booster session offered in September 2021 to trainers who were part of the November 2020 Business Train-the-Trainer cohort. That cohort only received 6 of the 10 classes given the need to convert the trainings to a virtual format in response to the pandemic. An additional optional booster was held to walk through the remaining four classes with anyone interested in attending once they were

adapted to a virtual format. Because the final evaluation survey data was collected during the booster session, this booster was included in our analyses.

Estimating reach of the Train-the-Trainer and Business Series

As of May 2023, there have been 195 trainers who have completed the Train-the-Trainer program across almost half of the states in the US (n=22 states). These trainers come from 63 different organizations (see Figure 9).

To estimate the number of educators who completed the Business Series by a trained trainer we provide two estimates: (1) at the individual trainer level, and (2) at the organization level. We provide two different estimates given that many trainers from the same organization co-facilitate trainings (e.g., two trainers per organization would facilitate one Business Series).

Based on data provided by Train-the-Trainer participants who shared data from 71 Business Series that they have offered, on average, each individual trainer offered the Series to 11 educators. Additionally, for every trainer that has reported back on conducting at least one Business Series, they have offered an average of 1.3 Series. At the organizational level, each organization provided the Business Series to an average of 22 educators. And for organizations that provided data for at least one Business Series, they have offered the Business Series an average of 2.8 times. As previously noted, these averages are likely *underestimates* of the total number of educators reached and Business Series offered due to challenges with obtaining data from trainers who are external to AOK.

Figure 9. Number of trainers who completed the Train-the-Trainer program by state (November 2020-May 2023)

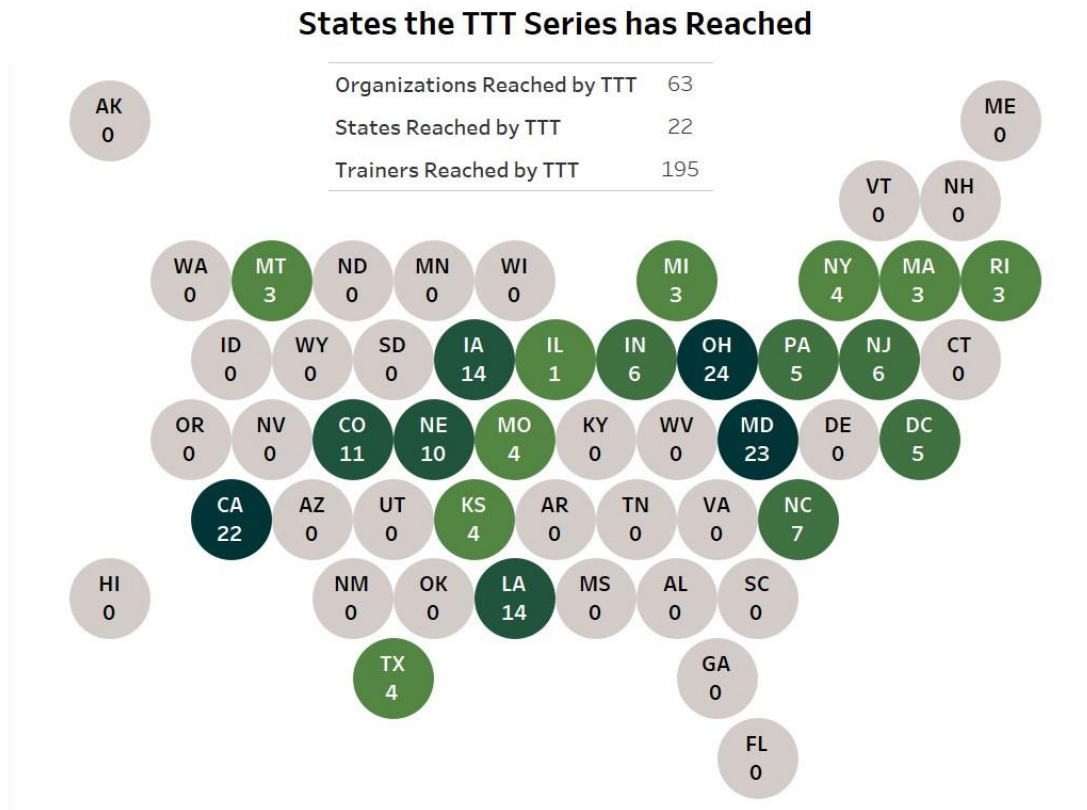


Table 3 shows the number of participants in each cohort.

Table 3. Business Train-the-Trainer Cohorts

Cohort	Participants
November 2020	3
May 2021	29
June 2021	12
September 2021*	8
January 2022	24
October 2022	26
March 2023	18
May 2023	21

*September 2021 was a special booster session for participants in the November 2020 cohort.

Note: Cohort numbers include individuals with both pre- and post-training data available. For September 2021, cohort size reflects number of individuals who filled out the evaluation form

Implementation supports. Based on the surveys and focus groups, we identified several key characteristics and contextual factors that supported the successful implementation of the Business Train-the-Trainer.

- Participants noted the high quality of the AOK training content, including the curriculum and the resources/handouts such as the budgeting worksheets.
- Participants noted the high quality of the activities designed by AOK to teach the material. Although virtual, they also liked the interactive and engaging training environment and noted the many creative ways AOK used to make the trainings interactive, such as small group sessions, games, music and movement breaks, and chances for participants to practice the skills learned. Opportunities for networking and peer learning were also cited as enhancing implementation. As one participant shared, “...So I think that [having fun in the training] really stood out and just like how the curriculum was built, that it was meant to be very, very engaging and very, you know, collaborative, every cohort definitely like forms a little bond and people exchange numbers and all that.”
- The knowledge and skill of AOK trainers and the provision of ongoing support to participants after completion of the Business Train-the-Trainer were also noted as an important support for successful TA implementation. As one participant reflected, their trainer also kept them grounded in the purpose of the training saying, “[Our AOK trainer] really emphasized...and I carry this to this day...you know, focusing on the providers being the experts and us being the learners with them.”

Continued on next page

Findings from prior evaluations

Prior evaluations have been conducted on the Business training strand. In Hartford, CT, AOK trained two individuals who provided the Business Series to 28 people, 25 of whom completed the Series. Of the educators who completed the Series, 92 percent improved their knowledge of FCC business practices from pre- to post-test. In addition to Hartford, AOK provided Business supports in Nebraska and this cohort demonstrated similar results; four people trained by AOK delivered the Series to 71 educators, 91 percent of whom improved their knowledge. Across prior evaluations of this strand, participants in the Business Train-the-Trainer have expressed satisfaction and demonstrated improved knowledge.

In past evaluations, participants in the Business Train-the-Trainer have also noted a desire for more content to be covered in the training. For example, participants requested information about specific facilitation strategies trainers can use and more information about marketing the Business Series training to educators. Recommendations from prior evaluators also included (1) changing the delivery approach to provide the Train-the-Trainer over five full days (as opposed to delivering it in two parts, one of which being four days and the other two days), (2) requiring trainers to deliver at least one Business Series and provide pre- and post-data to AOK, and (3) developing a more formal certification for trainers.

Programmatic changes in response to prior evaluations

In response to recommendations from prior evaluations, AOK revised the Train-the-Trainer content and delivery approach. More specifically, AOK has included additional content such as revised content on promoting equity in a classroom setting, more opportunities to include facilitation tips on the material and in general training, best practices for facilitators working with adult learners, and opportunities to practice technology and presentation skills. AOK shifted the Train-the-Trainer to five day training format and provides a certification to trainers. AOK staff also work closely with trained trainers to provide technical assistance on collecting and managing data collection as they deliver the Business Series.

Satisfaction. Trainers were very satisfied with the Train-the-Trainer. The most frequently endorsed favorite part of the training related to the engaging and interactive TA format. As one participant shared, *“This training was one of the most efficient and engaging trainings I’ve ever participated in. I think anyone who would have to teach business practices to a child care provider should take this training.* Participants cited the variety of interactive activities and formats for learning, such as breakout rooms, learning labs, games, panels, and time to practice teaching. Networking and peer learning were also mentioned frequently, with participants appreciating opportunities to meet, socialize, and learn from professionals from around the country.

At the end of each training cohort, participants were asked to complete a final evaluation survey. On the survey, participants were asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements about the Business Train-the-Trainer content. Across the seven cohorts from which we have data, participants overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed with most statements. For example, almost 100 percent of participants agreed that the activities were helpful for understanding the content and that the training enhanced their professional development (see Table 4).

Table 4. Business Train-the-Trainer participants who agreed or strongly agreed with content statements

Statement	May 2021 (n = 21)	June 2021 (n = 18)	Sept 2021 (n = 8)	Jan 2022 (n = 26)	Oct 2022 (n = 26)	Mar 2023 (n = 19)	May 2023 (n = 22)
The objectives of the training were clear.	95%	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	100%
The activities were helpful for understanding the content of each class.	100%	100%	88%	100%	96%	95%	100%
The training provided supplemental materials that were useful.	95%	100%	100%	96%	NA	NA	NA
The information learned was helpful in preparing to teach the Business Series.	100%	100%	100%	96%	NA	NA	NA
The training increased my confidence in my ability to teach the Business Series.	95%	100%	100%	96%	NA	NA	NA
The training enhanced my professional development.	100%	100%	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA

Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Surveys

NA indicates that this question was not asked in the feedback survey.

Note: While there were 20 participants in the May 2021 cohort, 21 people responded to the survey. It was not possible to identify which extra response should be deleted, so all survey responses were included in the analysis.

On the final evaluation survey, participants were also asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements about the training environment (see Table 5). Again, almost all participants across the seven cohorts with data agreed or strongly agreed with most statements. For example, almost 100 percent of participants agreed that the training allowed for active participation and offered opportunities to learn from others.

Table 5. Business Train-the-Trainer Participants who agreed or strongly agreed with training environment statements

Statement	May 2021 (n = 21)	June 2021 (n = 18)	Sept 2021 (n = 8)	Jan 2022 (n = 26)	Oct 2022 (n = 26)	Mar 2023 (n = 19)	May 2023 (n = 22)
The training allowed for active participation.	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	100%

Statement	May 2021 (n = 21)	June 2021 (n = 18)	Sept 2021 (n = 8)	Jan 2022 (n = 26)	Oct 2022 (n = 26)	Mar 2023 (n = 19)	May 2023 (n = 22)
The training provided opportunities to learn from others.	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	95%
The training encouraged questions.	100%	100%	100%	100%	NA	NA	NA
The training encouraged independent problem solving.	100%	100%	100%	92%	96%	95%	100%
The training provided an opportunity to share ideas.	100%	100%	88%	96%	NA	NA	NA
The training provided an opportunity to practice the skills I learned during the day.	100%	100%	100%	96%	NA	NA	NA

Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Surveys

The final survey also asked participants about the AOK trainers who facilitated the Business Train-the-Trainer. Again, across the seven cohorts with data, results were consistent; almost all participants agreed or strongly agreed that the trainers created a trustful environment for communication, were sensitive to other’s ideas, and encouraged discussions of cultural diversity (see Table 6).

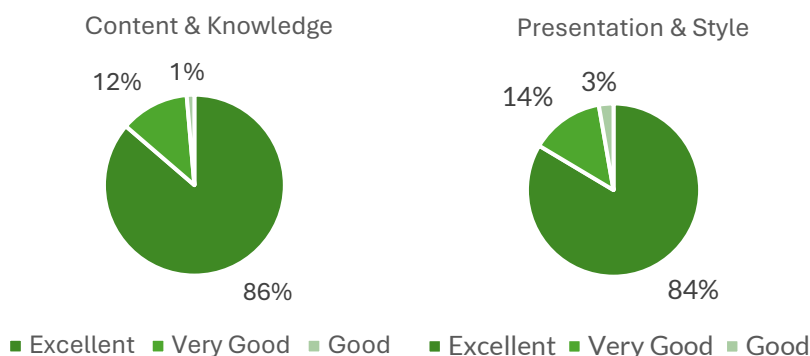
Table 6. Percentage of Business Train-the-Trainer Participants who agreed or strongly agreed with facilitation statements

Statement	May 2021 (n = 21)	June 2021 (n = 18)	Sept 2021 (n = 8)	Jan 2022 (n = 26)	Oct 2022 (n = 26)	Mar 2023 (n = 19)	May 2023 (n = 22)
The trainer(s) created a trustful environment for communication.	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	95%
The trainer(s) were sensitive to others’ ideas.	95%	100%	88%	100%	96%	95%	95%
The trainer(s) encouraged discussions of cultural diversity.	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	95%	95%

Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Surveys

Survey respondents also had very favorable ratings of the content, knowledge, and presentation/style of the Business Train-the-Trainer facilitators. Across all cohorts from May 2021-January 2022¹⁰, 86 percent of participants rated the trainers as having excellent content and knowledge and 84 percent rated them as having excellent presentation and style. See Figure 10.

Figure 10. Ratings of Business Train-the-Trainers (n=73)



Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Surveys

Nearly all participants across the seven cohorts from which we have survey data agreed that the Business Train-the-Trainer was worth the time they invested. Nearly 100 percent in six of the seven cohorts agreed that it was worth the financial resources that they – or their sponsoring organization – invested. Slightly fewer participants agreed that they felt prepared to teach the Business Series in two cohorts (see Table 7). Additionally, about three-fourths of participants reported that they were very satisfied with their experience participating in the Business Train-the-Trainer. Across all the cohorts, only seven people reported feeling very unsatisfied, but they still shared positive feedback about the Train-the-Trainer.¹¹

Table 7. Percentage of Business Train-the-Trainer Participants who agreed or strongly agreed with perceptions statements

Statement	May 2021 (n = 21)	June 2021 (n = 18)	Sept 2021 (n = 8)	Jan 2022 (n = 26)	Oct 2022 (n = 26)	Mar 2023 (n = 19)	May 2023 (n = 22)
Business Institute was worth the time I invested.	100%	100%	N/A	100%	96%	100%	95%
Business Institute was worth the financial resources I, or my organization, invested.	100%	100%	N/A	88%	96%	95%	100%
I feel prepared to teach the Business Series.	95%	94%	N/A	88%	100%	100%	91%

Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Surveys

¹⁰ Please note these questions were not asked of Train-the-Trainer participants after January 2022.

¹¹ The seven individuals who reported being unsatisfied may have selected the wrong response given their open-ended comments are positive.

Opportunities for improvement. Certain contextual factors were identified as barriers to successful implementation of the Business Train-the-Trainer. It is important to note that these were voiced by a much smaller number of people compared to the implementation supports. Still, it is important to acknowledge the factors that may make implementation less successful – whether they are experienced by few or many – to inform improvements for future cohorts.

- The first contextual barrier was the virtual format. While the virtual format allowed for easier and more accessible participation without the need for travel, there were downsides. Some participants mentioned feeling less engaged in a virtual format, compared to being in-person, and others expressed challenges with certain aspects of technology, such as utilizing breakout rooms in Zoom. In interviews with trainers, however, participants noted that AOK offered training and supports to accommodate varying comfort levels with participating and delivering a training in a virtual format.
- Another commonly mentioned barrier was time. Participants wished for more time – sometimes for specific content areas, and other times for specific activities (for example, more time for networking, or more time for practicing). Participants also acknowledged, however, that the training week was already very full, and that it would be hard to shift anything around or to ask people to commit beyond a week.

Participant Perspective

“I think there should be more time to gain a fuller understanding of the material, more role-playing.”

“I wasn’t anticipating the time needed in the evening to complete homework/ presentation. It was workable, but I think it would be helpful to point out this expectation.”

Business Series

Background. The Business Series is a ten-week training offered by trainers who completed the Train-the-Trainer program designed to support FCC educators with developing the skills to manage and grow their home-based business. The Business Series is currently available in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. It is free to educators because the cost is covered by the organization that offers the Series. Topics covered in the Series include but are not limited to marketing, risk management, accounting, record-keeping, and financial management. Implementation of the Business Series can be thought of as an outcome of AOK’s provision of the Business Train-the-Trainer. However, for simplicity, we discuss implementation of the Business Series in this section.

Implementation supports. In focus groups with a subset of trainers, trainers who have implemented the Business Series in their communities were asked what contributed to successful implementation of the Series. Supports included:

- The Business Series meets a demonstrated need for educators by providing information that is not being offered by many other training or professional development opportunities. Trainers also described how valuable the content was, both for new and very experienced educators.

Participant Perspective

“We get great feedback from the family child care providers taking [the Business Series], because we only had classes for child development or nutrition [before]. [Not] for the financial part.”

“I had been teaching classes for 15-20 years, and this was the first time a provider sent me an email the next day. [...] I didn’t realize she was getting so much from this until I got this note, so remembering that we don’t always know how much of an impact we may have. It’s not because we’re the greatest trainers but because of the content and the teams.”

- While some trainers had challenges with the virtual format, others described the virtual format as being supportive, noting the ways it increased accessibility because the educators did not need to travel from around the state or region to engage in the TA. As one participant shared, *“Doing [the training] online was like one of the main reasons [we chose AOK’s model] because we teach our series online because we offer it statewide.”*
- Offering incentives to educators was also noted by some as supporting successful implementation of the Series.

Opportunities for growth. Similarly, trainers participating in focus groups were asked about what they viewed as the primary barriers to implementing the Business Series.

- Like the Train-the-Trainer, the virtual format was also noted as a barrier for some. Specifically, technology challenges, concerns about computer literacy, and Zoom fatigue among educators created challenges. In response to these concerns, AOK offered additional technical assistance to trainers who were in need of technology-related supports.
- A big concern for some trainers was also the amount of time required to participate in the Series, and how best to secure buy-in from educators given the fact that such a large commitment of time is required. Most trainers delivered the Series over the course of 10 weeks, and many described their enrollment numbers dropping after week two or three. They expressed concerns about how to increase enrollment *and* ensure that those they enroll have the capacity and interest to complete the Series.
- Related to enrollment and completion, some trainers expressed concerns about the cost to their organization of hosting the trainings, especially if they were only graduating a small number of educators. Some trainers reported that more than half of their participants never graduated, and their were concerns about the financial ramifications for organizations with already tight budgets. At the same time, other trainers described wanting to conduct more trainings to meet the demand in their area, but not having the funds available to do so.
- Finally, trainers who delivered the Business Series in Spanish noted they spent additional time making corrections and editing the content of already existing translated materials.

Participant Perspective

“There is an assumption, I think, with the virtual [format], that people are very proficient on the computer. And my experience working with the family child care population [...] is that is *not* a fair assumption.”

Participant Perspective

“One of the concerns was that the providers did not stay the entire 10 weeks, or they did not complete it. [...] We would send them the information ahead of time, we spent this money to send it out. And then they come to two classes, and they're done. [...] It's a very expensive training, you know, even though our company is paying for it, but you know, we make all of these preparations, and then we start out with 12 people on day one. And by day three, we have two [people].”

Measuring Success/Outcomes

In conversations with Child Trends and staff from AOK involved in the Business training strand, success was defined in a few different ways:

- **Knowledge.** Does trainers’ knowledge of best practices for FCC operations change after completing the Train-the-Trainer or Series?

- **Preparedness.** Is the Business Train-the-Trainer adequately preparing the trainers to implement the Business Series with fidelity?
- **Reach.** How many trainers complete the Train-the-Trainer, representing how many different organizations? What is the geographic spread of these organizations? How many educators ultimately receive the information from the Business Series? And how does this information impact their attitudes and knowledge?

Trainer Knowledge

Trainers are asked to complete a brief online test which includes several questions about FCC operations both before and after they participate in the Train-the-Trainer – which acts as a gauge of knowledge before and after completing the training. Across the seven cohorts for which there is data, the average test scores increased from the pre to the post-test ($t=-18.12$, $p<0.001$, average change in score of 19.0%), with more than three-fourths of trainers reporting score increases (see Figure 11). This represents a statistically significant improvement on post-test scores and suggests that AOK is successfully shifting the knowledge of trainers who participate in and complete the Business Train-the-Trainer.

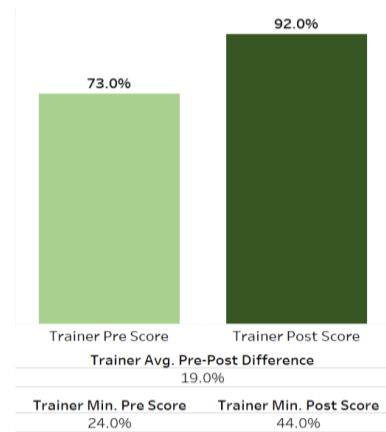
Trainer Preparedness

When asked on the last day of the Train-the-Trainer, 89 percent of trainers across the six cohorts for which we have data agreed or strongly agreed that they felt prepared to teach the Business Series. This finding suggests that AOK is successfully preparing trainers to deliver the Business Series. Slightly fewer trainers (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to track their own progress and success with implementing the Business Series.

Educator Knowledge

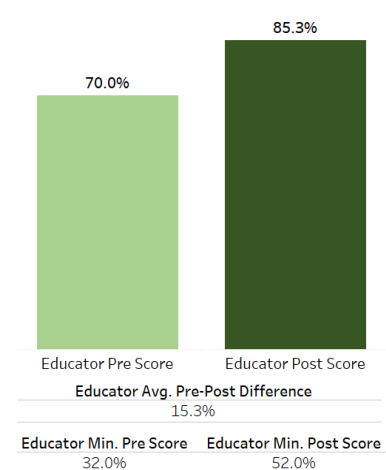
Educators who participate in the Business Series are also asked to take a brief pre and post-test which includes questions about their knowledge of FCC operations, both before and after completing the Business Series. The quiz questions match the content areas taught in the Business Series. For example, there are questions about policy handbooks, filing taxes, budgeting and business transactions, contracts, time-space percentages, and marketing. As with the Train-the-Trainer, from the Business Series data available, the average test scores improved by 15.3% from the pre to the post test ($t=-12.90$, $p<.001$; see Figure 12). This represents a statistically significant improvement on post-test scores and suggests that trainers are successfully improving the knowledge of trainers who participate in and complete the Business Series. For additional information on the average difference by question, please see Appendix.

Figure 11. Change in Business Train-the-Trainer Participant Knowledge (n=135)



Source: AOK Business Train-the-Trainer Pre/Post Test; $p<.001$

Figure 12. Change in Business Series Participant Knowledge (n=131)



Source: AOK Business Series Pre/Post Test; $p<.001$

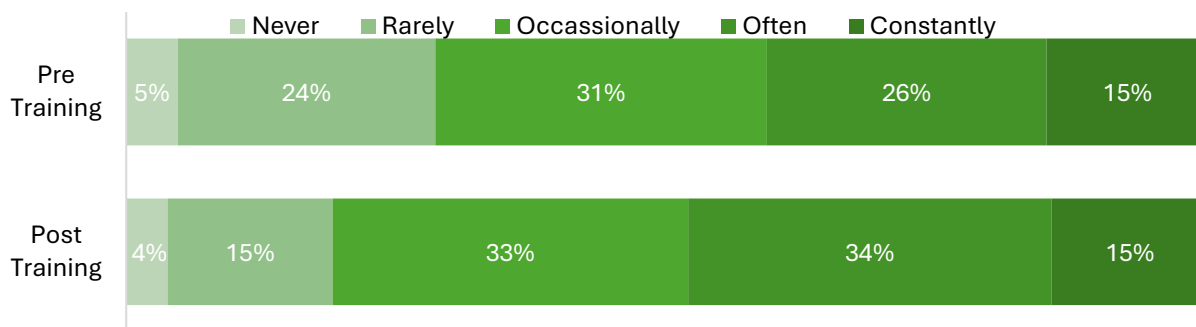
Educator Attitudes and Beliefs

Educators who participated in the Business Series were also asked to answer questions about their attitudes and beliefs related to their jobs, both before and after the Series.

For example, educators were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their job on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. In general, educators reported similar levels of job satisfaction before and after participating in the Business Series. Before the Series, the average score was 4.45 out of 5 and after the Series, the average score was 4.51 out of 5. Additionally, educators reported similar stress levels and peer support levels before (3.03 and 3.32, respectively) and after (2.95 and 3.40, respectively) after participating in the Business Series.

With respect to peer support, educators were asked how often they talked to other educators: never, rarely (1-2 times per year), occasionally (1-2 times per month), often (at least weekly), or constantly (every day). Before the Series, 41 percent of educators responded that they sought out peer support often or constantly. After the Business Series, 48 percent noted the same (see Figure 13).

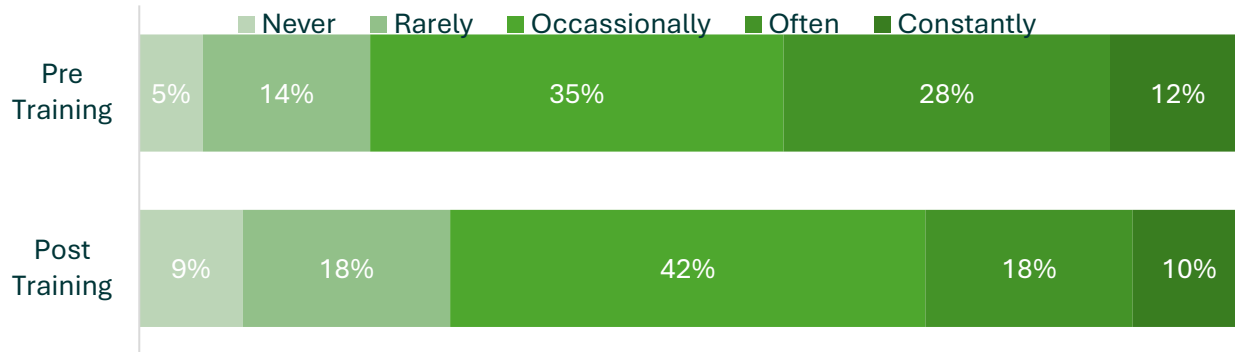
Figure 13. Frequency with which educators talk to other educators for peer support (Pre-Training n=147, Post-Training n=131)



Source: Business Series Survey

Educators were also asked to use the same frequency scale to report how often they felt stressed about managing the business side of their child care programs. Educators' reported high levels of stress (often, constantly) decreased following the Series, from 40% to 28% (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Educators' reported stress levels before and after the Business Series (Pre-Training n=147, Post-Training n=131)



Source: Business Series Survey

Finally, educators were asked how long into the future they anticipated keeping their businesses open: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, or more than 10 years. Responses slightly decreased after the Series, although at least two-thirds of educators still reporting that they anticipated staying open for 10+ years (76% before, 67% after; see Table 8).

Table 8. Educators’ anticipated length of time keeping business open before/after the Business Series

Statement	Before the Business Series (n=147)	After the Business Series (n=131)
N/A	3%	3%
1-3 years	5%	3%
4-6 years	10%	12%
7-9 years	5%	15%
10+ years	76%	67%

Source: Business Series Survey

Similarly, educators were asked to rate their level of confidence in their technology skills related to running a business. Before, 56 percent of educators felt somewhat or very confident with using technology to participate in the Series; after, 82 percent felt somewhat or very confident.

These examples suggest that the trainers, using the AOK Business Series, were successful at changing some attitudes – specifically with job satisfaction and confidence with technology – of educators in their communities.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, Child Trends suggests three recommendations for the Business Train-the-Trainer which are outlined below.

Recommendations for Business Train-the-Trainer

1. Consider piloting a formal peer mentorship program for new trainers to receive additional support from more experienced trainers.
2. Offer consistent scholarship opportunities for educators (or others without financial/organizational resources) to become trainers and consider how to support these trainers in offering the Business Series.
3. Determine how to increase trainer capacity for ongoing data collection and monitoring of the Business Series to help ensure that AOK can collect and analyze more reliable data about the reach of Business training activities.
4. Explore how to better support trainers in delivering the training after completing the Train-the-Trainer program – for example by developing implementation plans with trainers or asking about implementation plans at the application phase.

Recommendations for Business Series

1. Consider the additional needs that organizations and trainers have for support, especially related to recruitment and retention of educators in the Business Series, and how to meet those needs. For example, how could AOK support trainers in providing additional incentives to educators to complete the full Series?

2. Assess what steps could be taken to increase the accessibility (and therefore the reach) of the Business Series by improving existing translated materials and considering what other languages could be offered.
3. Continue to provide technology support to trainers who may need to provide technology support to educators.
4. Consider ways to provide thought partnership or technical assistance to trainers on how to offset the financial and time resources needed to participate in the Business Series.
5. Consider forming partnerships with institutes of higher education or other entities (such as the National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children, or the Council for Professional Recognition) to create opportunities for educators to earn credits for completing the Business Series. This may be particularly relevant for educators who are interested in earning degrees or certificates.

Policy

Implementation Findings

Background

The inaugural policy cohort occurred from March 2020 to November 2020 and a prior evaluation assessed its implementation.¹² As reported by inaugural participants, AOK facilitation was a critical component of the policy cohort's success. Focus group participants reported that they depended heavily on the AOK facilitator who scheduled, coordinated, led, and kept a record of the team meetings, which enabled them to focus on the "work."

Other ways cohort goals were supported included:

- Goal alignment with one's organizational mission and daily work
- A team focus on FCC
- Team readiness to participate in the cohort (e.g., organizational buy-in and support to participate, time to participate)

As described in the prior evaluation, some of the challenges that inaugural cohort participants faced were difficulties with goal setting; for example, not having a deliberate or intentional process to set goals or setting goals and monitoring goal progress or indicators too late in the cohort process. Delaying goal setting and/or not monitoring progress towards goals interfered with teams having a clear direction and action steps for team members to work towards. In addition, the inaugural cohort was launched at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants overwhelmingly reported they felt the pandemic had a significant impact on their goals and accomplishments because they had so many other competing demands.

When examining sustainability of the cohort team activities, recommendations from team members focused on processes (such as identifying and planning for next steps in the absence of supports and resources provided during the cohort), as well as infrastructure (how to sustain the work with TA and support provided by AOK). After the inaugural cohort, AOK began to require educator participation in policy cohort teams.

Lastly, AOK conducted interviews with 8 out of the 10 inaugural cohort teams to reflect on their experience with participating in the cohort and to understand how team members have continued to engage in FCC policy work after the formal cohort period.¹³ In their overall reflections, inaugural cohort participants appreciated having a dedicated space to focus on FCC and support from AOK. When identifying the most important aspects of maintaining the work of the cohort, teams who continued to meet in some capacity,

¹² Lloyd & Shaw (2021)

¹³ All Our Kin (n.d.). *All Our Kin Pilot Policy Cohort: Re Engagement Activity Takeaways*.

who identified “champions” in FCC, and who had funding support were more successful in moving their work forward.

Cohort teams were asked about any outcomes or achievements they have had since the formal cohort ended. States reported increased networking, engagement, and visibility for the FCC community in various ways. Two states – Michigan and Louisiana – had key legislative victories for FCC educators. Michigan increased the eligibility for child care subsidy from 150 percent to 200 percent through 2023. They also created an educator ambassador group to gather statewide educator input about the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds. Louisiana is currently in Year 3 of their new statewide network of FCC educators, which is funded by a state Preschool Development Grant. The network serves 80 educators in 20 different parishes. Louisiana has also had two legislative victories: FCC educators can now opt-in to the Quality Rating and Improvement System, making them eligible for school readiness tax credits and other funding incentives; and they also recently raised their Child Care Assistance Program subsidy rates.

The second policy cohort was held October 2021 to June 2022 and is the subject of the following findings.

Cohort Team Characteristics

Overall, 17 team members participated in the cohort, with 7 representing Maryland, and 10 representing Texas. Survey results indicated a range of funding supports for participation in the cohort including private, in-kind, and organizational funding. Both individual interviewees reported they had organizational support to participate. Participant roles were spread across directors and administrators, program managers, coordinators, analysts, and FCC educators. FCC educator representation was required on each team, and each team was expected to compensate educators for their participation. Maryland’s team had a larger proportion of director and administrator representation and a smaller team overall than Texas. Organizations included a range of early childhood, health, and policy non-profits; local and county health departments; and child care associations. See Table 9.

Table 9. Policy Cohort Participant Roles

Role	MD	TX
Director/Administrator		
Early Childhood/ECE		3
Child Care/FCC	4	
Policy	1	
Health		1
Program Manager/ Coordinator/Analyst		
Early Childhood/ECE	1	2
Child Care/FCC	1	
Policy		1
Health		1
Family Child Care Educator*	1	2

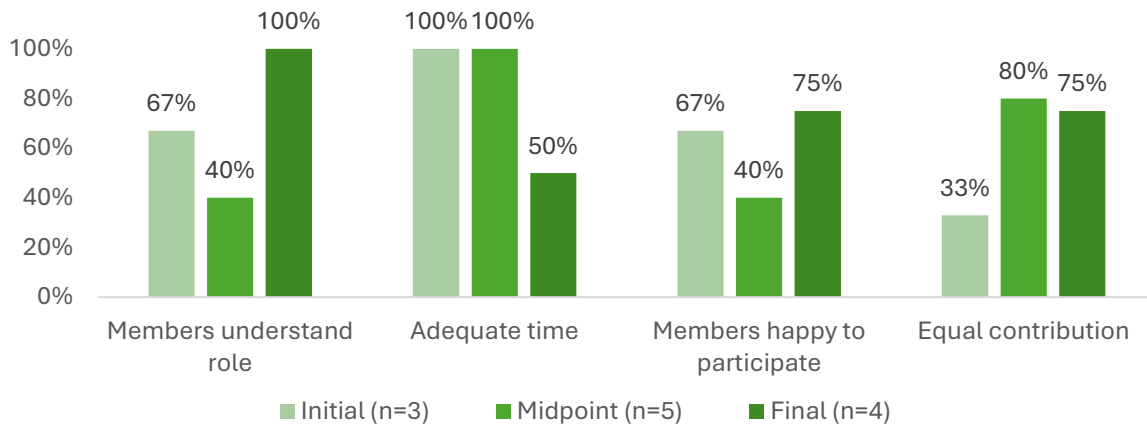
*The MD FCC educator was also counted as a Director/Administrator

Feedback on Team Context

Figures 15 and 16 show the proportion of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with various questions on team context. Because the number of respondents is low, changes in percentages should be interpreted conservatively. In terms of the team context, participants in Maryland generally reported increased clarity regarding their role on the team and a slight increase in perceived interest among team members to participate over time. They also showed that equal participation across members improved over

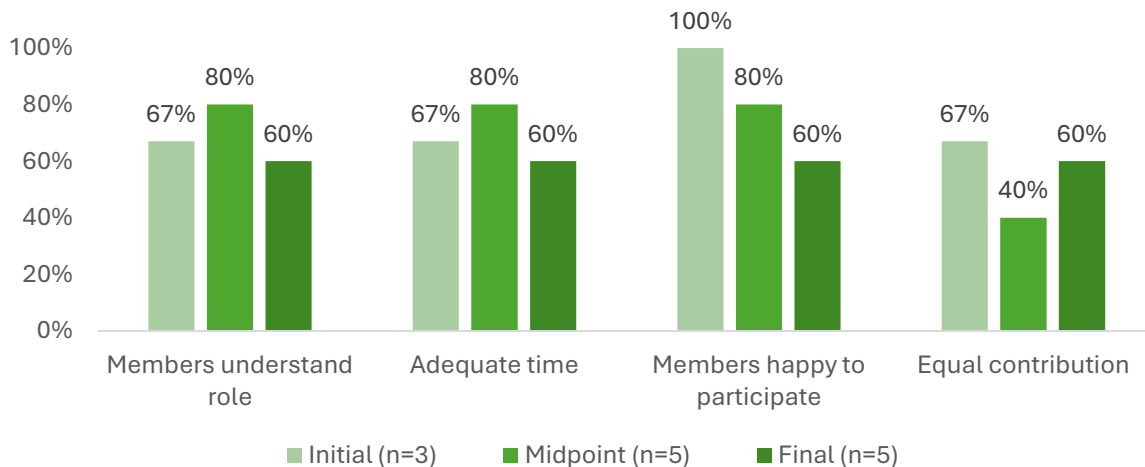
time. At the final timepoint, there was an increase in the proportion of participants reporting not having adequate time to participate in the cohort. Participants in Texas reported fluctuations in role clarity and time to participate. Team members' interest in participating in the cohort decreased over time. Perceptions about equal contribution among members stayed fairly stable across time with about two-thirds of respondents agreeing that team contributions were equal.

Figure 15. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with team context questions, Maryland



Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

Figure 16. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with team context questions, Texas



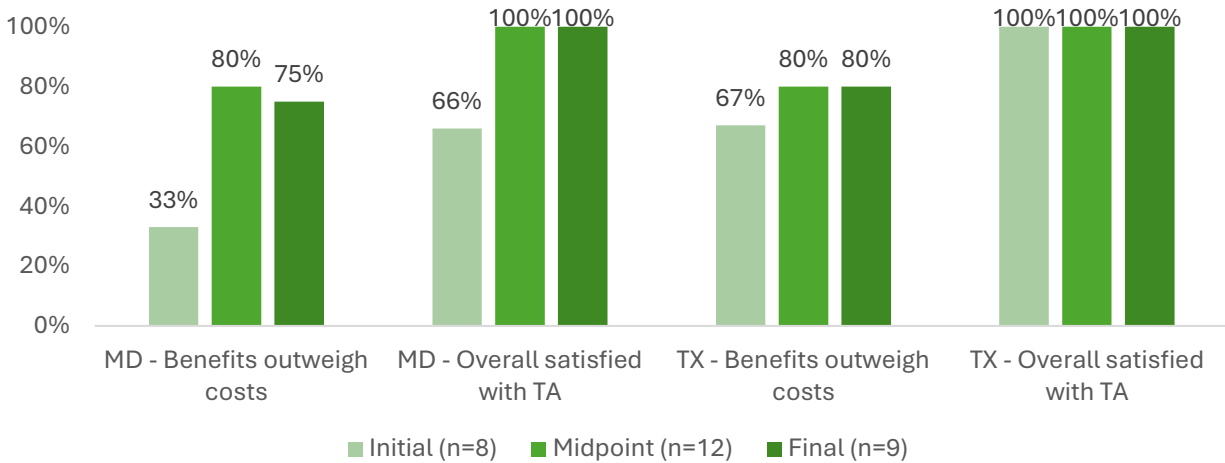
Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys. Only two people responded to the question on the initial survey about team members being happy to participate.

Satisfaction

Teams received a range of TA services throughout the cohort, which included monthly meetings, “between meeting” learning activities, and individual meetings or consultations with AOK. Figure 17 shows the proportion of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed (or were satisfied/very satisfied) with items about overall satisfaction and whether the benefits of participating in the cohort outweighed the costs. Both teams reported increases in the perceived benefits, outweighing the cost of participation in the cohort over

time. All participants reported on the midpoint and final surveys that they were satisfied overall with the TA they received.

Figure 17. Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed (or were satisfied/very satisfied) with satisfaction questions

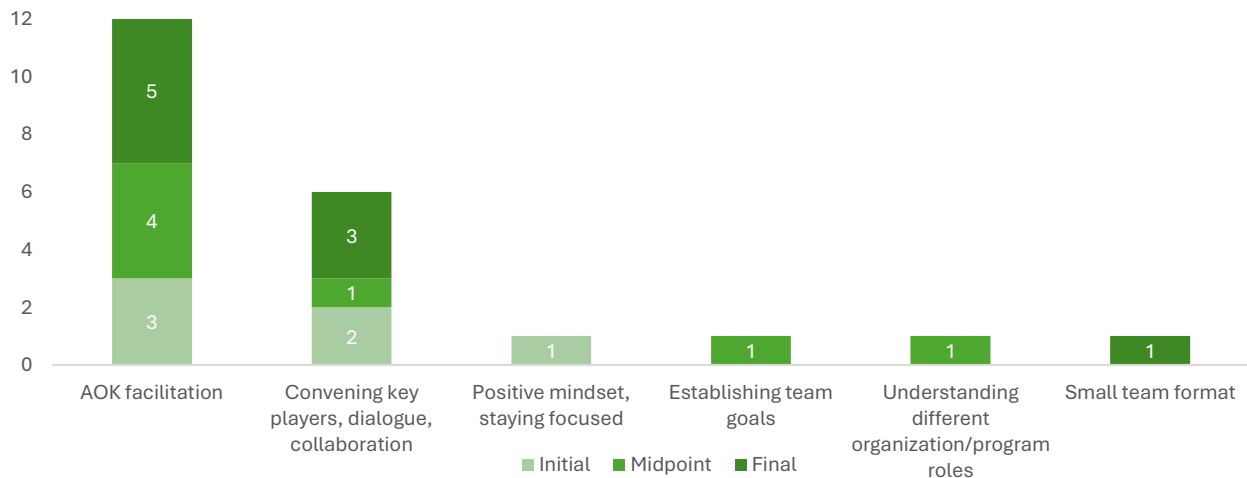


Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

Implementation supports

Survey respondents were asked an open-ended item about what had been working well thus far during team meetings. This question was asked at each time point. Overall, across teams and time, AOK facilitation was consistently identified as a factor that was going well for their teams. Specifically, participants appreciated AOK’s contributions to organizing and structuring the cohort to move them towards action and AOK’s management of logistics. A second common theme was participants’ appreciation for the relational nature of the cohort, which offered opportunities for key players to convene, have honest dialogue, and collaborate to advance the work. Other items that were mentioned by a single participant included having a positive mindset or approach to the team, establishing team goals, understanding the different roles of programs and organizations, and having a small team format for meetings. See Figure 18.

Figure 18. Number of mentions of different supports at different time points



Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

When asked about the most beneficial aspect of participating in the cohort, individual interview participants highlighted the importance of connection, resource sharing, and being part of something “bigger” to advance FCC. Across locations and time points, the relational aspect of the cohort was identified as the biggest success, which included convening key players, collaborating on shared goals, and engaging as a team. At the initial and midpoint survey, some participants also identified team agreement on goals and action steps as a success. By the final survey, some participants also highlighted their end-of-cohort “product” (shared vision and policy agenda for FCC in Maryland, and a virtual FCC educator event in Texas) as the biggest success. Several other single participants identified other successes at the initial and midpoint surveys, including elevating FCC needs, leveraging existing resources to move the work forward, understanding cost estimation models, and successfully managing their time commitment. See Figure 19.

Participant Perspective:

“Coming together of FCC providers and advocates in a genuine way and creating an energy and momentum that will definitely be carried forward.”

“The inclusion; I felt that I was part of a bigger effort or goal to get all the resources together and connect the dots and find out what is out there to support FCC.”

Figure 19. Number of mentions of different successes at different time points



Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

Participant Perspective

“It was difficult keeping some stakeholders engaged throughout the process, including our lead team. I felt like there could have been more time dedicated to this cohort because we were doing lots of wonderful things, but time just seemed to fly.”

“As a brown ESL provider, I sometimes am unsure about asking questions, the small group helped me a lot, but this continues to be a challenge.”

“We recruited a lot of people who did not know each other, so the relationship building needed to take some time. It also felt like there was very little time even if the time was well spent. [...] The format of initial engagement needed to be tweaked and everyone realized that.”

Barriers

Four key challenges to participating in the cohort were identified by team members. These included time constraints; lack of clarity on team goals, roles, or action planning; a lack of comfort with fully participating in cohort discussions; and keeping stakeholders engaged. More participants reported challenges with time constraints at the end of the cohort compared to the beginning. Individual interview participants also noted time constraints were a challenge, which impacted their ability to form strong relationships with team members, particularly those whose agencies may have a focus outside of the team’s primary goals.

Table 10. Number of Policy Cohort participants who identified each challenge

Theme	Initial	Midpoint	Final
Time constraints	1	1	3
Unclear goals, roles, action planning	1	1	1
Comfort participating			1
Keeping stakeholders engaged			1

Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

Measuring Success/Outcomes

Team Goals

Both teams in the cohort had goals for supporting FCC educators. When reflecting on their goals in the final survey, participants in Maryland talked about creating a shared vision for child care, including developing alternative pathways to certification and identifying resources and programs for FCC educators. Participants in Texas discussed understanding the FCC landscape and building networks for resource sharing and funding for FCC educators.

Figures 20 and 21 show the proportion of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with items about goal attainment and applicability. Across teams, about 75-80 percent of participants thought their team goals could be or were met. For Maryland, by the midpoint and final surveys, all participants indicated that their team goals aligned with their organizations’ mission and their day-to-day work. In Texas, all participants also noted that their team goals aligned with their organizations’ mission at the end of the cohort. Slightly fewer participants, however thought those goals aligned with their day-to-day work.

Participant Perspective

“Creating a shared vision to advance family child care programs. To create a better condition in Maryland so that we can break the silos and find out what resources/programs are out there to support family child care programs.”

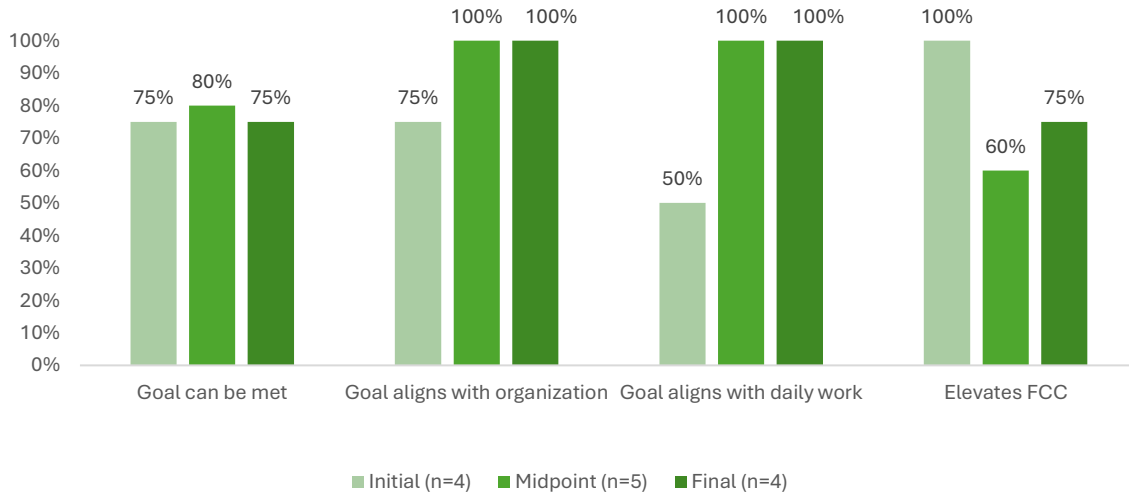
“Better understand the landscape of home-based child care providers in Houston (who they are, where they are located, how well connected they are to each other and private/state support agencies).”

“Effecting social and policy change to support family child care providers in a holistic way.”

“Build a supportive network through which resources and funding can funnel into family child care providers.”

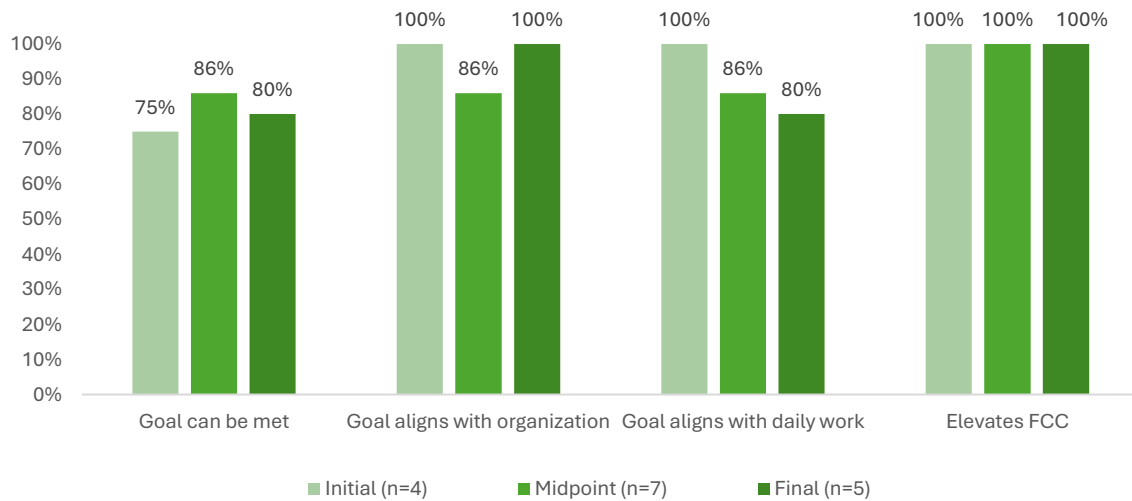
In Texas, all participants reported that the work of their team was elevating FCC educator perspectives, while in Maryland, slightly fewer participants indicated the cohort work was elevating FCC educator perspectives.

Figure 20. Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with goal attainment and applicability items, Maryland



Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

Figure 21. Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with goal attainment and applicability items, Texas



Source: Initial, midpoint, and final surveys

One participant described an initial process of goal setting that was not feasible; however, with time, a more realistic goal was set and achieved. Similar to other evaluation findings, the participant talked about the importance of AOK serving in an organizing role to continue momentum. See text box below. A comparable perspective was shared by an interview participant from Maryland.

Participant Perspective

“We needed more direction and focus than we initially realized. [...] We got ahead of ourselves and had lofty goals but did end with a virtual event. Having more of that direction and focus from AOK, while also giving autonomy to the group – it felt like there was no actual leader. If the group were to start off with a focus group where they spent time listening to priorities of providers, reacting, starting the conversation, and what supports are actually needed. From there, goals can take shape and form naturally. [...] Repeatedly communicating the timeline and reminding the team of that, start transition planning from the start. Keep the provider in mind and be realistic about the timeline and what can be achieved.”

End-of-Cohort Outcomes

The Maryland team created a policy document for a shared vision for FCC in Maryland and shared the document with ten educators from the Maryland State FCC Association. The Texas team held a virtual event for FCC educators and agencies. Approximately, 40 educators (English and Spanish speaking) attended the convening. In general, an AOK staff member described short-term outcomes for the policy strand being the promotion of educator voice in the policy space; actual policy changes take a longer amount of time. Additionally, the lead agency from one TA team approached AOK to request a larger business-focused TA contract.

At the end of the cohort, most team members agreed that progress made toward their team goals would be sustained after the cohort ended. However, feedback was mixed about whether the teams adequately engaged in discussions about sustainability. One third of team members disagreed that sustainability was adequately addressed during team discussions and activities. Both individual interviewees commented on the need for sustainability planning to happen sooner and to be more action-oriented. See Table 11.

Table 11. Number of respondents providing each response for sustainability items

Team	MD	TX	Total
Believe progress toward goals will be sustained after formal cohort ends			
Strongly Agree/Agree	4	3	7
Neutral	0	2	2
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	0	0	0
Adequately discussed sustainability			
Strongly Agree/Agree	3	2	5

Team	MD	TX	Total
Neutral	0	1	1
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	1	2	3

Source: Final survey

Participant responses made clear that while sustainability was discussed, they would have liked a greater focus on it. Specifically, they indicated they needed more instruction about how to implement practices to support sustainability.

Participant Perspective

“One thing that is not talked about but needs to be is logistics. How can we actually make best practices happen in the real world? How can we get people to get on board and support that? How [can] the connection between providers and advocates be strengthened and what would it take to make that happen? Funds, compensation, bringing a network of providers who are already convening? Having those conversations about logistics is the biggest barrier. We need to walk the walk, not just talk about it.”

“There is a description of sustainability and what is going on, but not as much of the ‘how to’ – how to support each other or go forward together after the cohort ends. [I would say] discussion, idea sharing, and planning for implementation with benchmarks and specific steps on how to achieve them [are needed].”

Participants offered several recommendations for enhancing sustainability planning in future cohorts. Most of these recommendations focused on two key themes: being deliberate about sustainability planning and identifying a group leader after AOK TA ends. Participants articulated a desire for sustainability planning to start at the beginning of the TA process, including a focus on details such as the time commitment required to engage in the process, identification of existing resources to be leveraged to support the work, and acquiring funding to incentivize participation, particularly for FCC educators. They also noted sustainability plans should be clear, measurable, and assign specific tasks to move the work forward. Identifying a group leader to proactively organize the group, schedule meetings, and lead the work was also important to moving the work forward, as was identifying a backbone organization with resources to support regular convenings, rather than standalone meetings. One participant also said that creating a virtual space to build peer networks with FCC educators could be one mechanism for continued and enhanced networking and collaboration.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, Child Trends has three recommendations for future Policy TA delivery.

1. Help teams identify clear and measurable goals early, and help them discuss sustainability throughout the cohort period. Work with participants to identify funding and other sustainability challenges unique to their local context.
2. Promote teams with pre-established relationships and/or help teams with purposeful relationship building.
3. Consider how to ensure participants have the time, support, and financial incentives to participate, particularly educators whose voices need to be elevated. Given AOK’s fee-based structure, offering a

formal certificate and/or Continuing Education Units to participants may be a useful strategy for encouraging more participation and to counterbalance the cost of the TA fee.

Cross-Strand Findings and Recommendations

The prior sections presented findings and recommendations by strand. However, there are many takeaways and suggestions presented above that can be generalized across strands. This section presents these common themes.

Findings applicable across all strands

- **Participants are very satisfied with the TA they received from AOK.** Participants found AOK facilitation and expertise vital to the success of each strand. In addition, participants commented on the helpfulness of resources, activities, meetings, and more. This high level of satisfaction was also found in prior evaluations.^{14,15,16}
- **Participants enjoy peer and active learning.** Participants like the cohort structure where they are able to learn from and make connections with others around the country. This aligns with prior findings as well.^{17,18}
- **Participants wanted more content and/or activities.** Participants in all three strands noted that they wanted to extend the TA in order to dive more deeply into topics or explore additional material. Participants acknowledged the difficulty of asking people to dedicate more time to the strand. This aligns with prior findings as well.¹⁹
- **Participants experienced increased knowledge and readiness.** Participants in both the business and network development strands improved their knowledge and demonstrated enhanced readiness to teach the Business Series or implement a FCC network. Past evaluations have shown a similar result.^{20,21,22,23}
- **Funding and sustainability are ongoing challenges.** While the Business Train-the-Trainer is expected to become self-sustaining by 2025 or 2026, there are concerns about the ability of participating organizations to continue delivering the Business Series. For network development, we learned that the current fee for participation in the cohort does not cover strand operating costs, and cohort teams are concerned about obtaining funding for a sustained network. Participants in the policy cohort were concerned about team leadership and structure after the end of AOK TA. Similar funding and sustainability concerns were raised in past evaluations.^{24,25}

¹⁴ Cross Sector Consulting (2019a)

¹⁵ Cristofaro-Cleary, Farrell Wright & Crampton (2019)

¹⁶ Lloyd & Shaw (2021)

¹⁷ Cristofaro-Cleary, Farrell Wright, & Crampton (2019)

¹⁸ Lloyd & Shaw (2021)

¹⁹ Cristofaro-Cleary, Farrell Wright, & Crampton (2019)

²⁰ Cross Sector Consulting (2019b)

²¹ Cross Sector Consulting (2019a)

²² Cristofaro-Cleary, Farrell Wright, & Crampton. (2019)

²³ Lloyd & Shaw (2021)

²⁴ Cross Sector Consulting (2019b)

²⁵ Lloyd & Shaw (2021)

- **Cohesive relationships and clear, realistic goals are important supports.** Both the network development and policy strand findings highlighted how strong relationships within teams promoted success. The importance of relationships was noted in prior evaluations too.^{26,27,28}

Recommendations applicable across all strands

Across strands, there were recommendations in four of the five categories used throughout this report: strand structure, relationships, content and resources, and funding. We do not provide any recommendations related to AOK expertise since the findings indicate this is already exceptional.

- Continue to develop ways to strengthen the design of each cohort. While the specific recommendations vary depending on strand, generally consider offering participants tangible benefits for their participation (e.g., certificates) and restructuring engagement with sites to allow for more in-depth exploration of topics.
- Promote the development of strong within-team relationships and the full engagement of all team members, particularly educators.
- Explore relationships with institutes of higher education to provide certificates or continuing education units (CEUs) to help justify the TA fee and promote fuller engagement.
- Increase efforts around TA sustainability, including fundraising to cover the costs for TA participation. Consider drawing on state, local, or philanthropic ECE-focused monies to support participation in AOK TA. For instance, draw on federal dollars to fund FCC networks as a strategy to recruit and retain FCC educators.
- Focus more intentionally on funding and sustainability topics in trainings and meetings to help prepare participants to continue their efforts.

As AOK continues to offer TA and engage funders to support their work, we recommend highlighting the following promising practices AOK has employed:

- Processes to promote diversity of teams engaged
- Demonstrated improvements in knowledge and readiness among TA participants, as well as educators to some extent
- Strong commitment to ongoing data collection and evaluation to continue strengthening and refining TA offerings and approaches
- AOK's strong presence in the child care field as a trusted resource

In addition, as AOK continues to plan future evaluations and adaptations to their TA, we offer the following suggestions:

- Evaluative work should use equity principles, logic models, and conceptual frames (such as implementation science) to ground the work. We recommend identifying clear research questions based on the current AOK logic model to document the extent to which each aspect of the AOK theory of change is being realized, including a more intentional focus on assessing equity in terms of TA provision and outcomes.
- AOK has commissioned multiple implementation and descriptive studies of the various TA offerings. In many cases, the findings are similar across the studies. Given the rapid growth and expansion of AOK, as well as the increased interest and resources being allocated to FCC due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we recommend AOK take a step back to carefully review the recommendations presented

²⁶ Cross Sector Consulting (2019a)

²⁷ Cross Sector Consulting (2019b)

²⁸ Cristofaro-Cleary, Farrell Wright, & Crampton (2019)

in each evaluation report thus far, decide which changes to incorporate into the strands, and implement those changes. We also suggest utilizing a neutral facilitator with FCC, non-profit financing, and policy expertise to engage the team in these conversations.

- Once those changes are made, consider commissioning a TA-focused impact evaluation to identify if participation in AOK TA causes various outcomes (e.g., knowledge, readiness, etc.). Studies could also explore which aspects of or approaches to the TA are most effective (e.g., whether having the network development cohort teams be at different or similar stages of implementation), and the extent to which there are cumulative effects of participating in multiple strands.
- Before embarking on an impact study, however, we recommend strengthening current data collection methods. Some of the data collection methods used for the present evaluation had low response rates, which could be addressed by making participation in evaluation activities an expectation of TA participation. Offering incentives for survey completion (e.g., survey completion enables participants to be eligible for a lottery prize) is another strategy that might be considered to facilitate data collection. In addition, the data collection tools developed for this evaluation could be adapted in a way that includes parallel questions across repeated surveys and strands to facilitate straightforward comparisons. Finally, for the Business Series, it will be important to have a data tracking system to capture the characteristics of the individuals participating in the Business Series as well as the universe of individuals participating in the Business Series. This type of information can help AOK understand the extent to which survey responses are representative of all participants; understand the reach of the Series; and assess outcomes related to compensation, finances, equity, and other outcomes of interest.

To support these recommendations, we suggest the following roles for policy makers and private funders:

- Role of policy makers:
 - Consider building incentives or recognition into licensing or other state or local government sponsored efforts for participating in professional development, such as financial supports and rewards or designations as recommended child care providers. These incentives can spur more participation in AOK TA.
 - Support and participate in child care networks or collaborations to help strengthen relationships between child care stakeholders (including policymakers and/or state or local government staff) to provide a stronger foundation for stakeholders to work together to improve FCC.
 - Consider subsidizing professional development with public early care and education monies to help offset the cost or make professional development for early care and education professionals available at no cost.
 - Provide financial support for child care networks or collaborations to help strengthen relationships between child care stakeholders to provide a stronger foundation for sustainability.
 - Host convenings or other opportunities for discussion with early care and education educators and intermediaries including those focused on FCC to better inform spending on and decision making about how TA and other efforts specific to FCC may better support their early care and education system.
- Role of private funders:
 - Provide support for the relationship development needed to partner with institutes of higher education, provide start-up funds for the development of a certificate program, and provide funds to offset the costs of higher participant fees due to more intensive engagement. This

financial support can help AOK engage more individuals and organizations in their TA offerings.

- Provide support for team-building activities for participants, trainings for how best to engage educators, and support for the time AOK staff spend vetting potential participants to ensure values alignment.
- Provide “scholarships” for participants to receive TA (to release them from their normal duties to make time for professional development), particularly FCC educators.
- Provide funds to offset the costs of higher participant fees due to more content focused on sustainability, support the work TA participants do after their training/cohort ends, and support AOK in providing ongoing coaching and TA content around sustainability.
- Support public relations campaigns, policy briefs, videos, and other methods of publicizing successes for FCC that have occurred as a result of AOK TA. Intentionally target states and locales with large populations of FCC educators and/or with policy makers and other key stakeholders familiar and unfamiliar with the value of FCC to advance their knowledge of AOK TA and its benefits.

Conclusion

The findings from this evaluation have implications, not just for AOK but for the delivery and evaluation of early care and education TA more generally. Select lessons include the importance of TA facilitators’ knowledge, skills, and relationship building capabilities as strategies that support the participation in, positive receipt of, and meaningful outcomes for TA participants and educators. The value of fiscal resources to participate in and sustain TA, the need for streamlined data collection, and engagement in additional research on TA effectiveness were also highlighted. Taken together, the findings outlined in this report illustrate the uniqueness and value of AOK TA, as well as the need for additional reflection to set a plan of action for future TA strand implementation and evaluation.

Appendix: Data Collection Methods

Strand	Data source	Date of data collection
Business	Business Train-the-Trainer Pre/post Assessment	November 2020 -March 2023
	Business Train-the-Trainer Daily Exit Slips	May 2021-January 2022
	Business Train-the-Trainer Final Evaluation Survey	November 2020 -March 2023
	Monthly meetings with AOK staff	Ongoing (spring 2021 to winter 2024)
	Observations of Business Train-the-Trainer Community of Practice	February 2022
	Business Series Survey	October 2021- October 2023
	Focus groups with Business Train-the-Trainer participants	May 2021, May 2022
Network Development	Review of application materials	N/A
	Observations of cohort meetings	Throughout cohort
	Initial Survey	October 2021
	Ongoing Surveys	November 2021 – May 2022
	Final Survey	July 2022
	Meetings/informal focus group with AOK staff	Throughout cohort
	Focus groups with each team	July 2022
Policy	Review of application materials	October 2021
	Meeting observations	November, March, June 2021
	Initial Survey	November 2021
	Midpoint Survey	March 2021
	Final Survey	June 2021
	Meetings with AOK staff	Throughout cohort
	Individual interviews (originally planned as focus groups)	June 2022

Business Series Participant Accuracy and Average Difference by Question

	Avg. Pre	Avg. Post	Avg. Diff
1. Who is the customer of a family child care business?	25.9%	68.7%	42.9%
2. What is the minimum number of years a provider should save business records for taxes?	36.1%	61.8%	25.8%
3. T/F: If you charge a weekly fee, you should still be paid for the whole week even if the child is away for part of the week.	88.4%	98.5%	10.0%
4. Policy handbook or contract? A description of your program	85.0%	94.7%	9.6%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Information about the menu of meals you provide	80.3%	94.7%	14.4%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Information about your emergency evacuation procedures	89.1%	94.7%	5.5%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Information around paid holidays	47.6%	66.4%	18.8%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Your agreed upon pay rate	87.1%	96.9%	9.9%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Your clause around terminating the agreement	59.9%	70.2%	10.4%
4. Policy handbook or contract? Your request for parents to bring diapers	62.6%	81.7%	19.1%
5. What credentials should your tax preparer ideally have?	42.9%	74.0%	31.2%
6. What was Maria's profit last month?	94.6%	93.1%	-1.4%
7. In the question above, did Maria meet her budget goal?	85.7%	78.6%	-7.1%
8. A business expense must be ___ and ___ in order to be deductible.	34.7%	93.1%	58.4%
9. Income, business-only expense, or shared expense? Purchased a printer (\$110) that will be used for business and personal use	69.4%	89.3%	19.9%
9. Income, business-only expense, or shared expense? Purchased food for children \$140	84.4%	96.9%	12.6%
9. Income, business-only expense, or shared expense? Received payment of \$350 from Smith family	89.1%	94.7%	5.5%
9. Income, business-only expense, or shared expense? Received public subsidy reimbursement check of \$1300	81.6%	94.7%	13.0%
10. The Time-Space Percentage applies to which of the following expenses:	49.7%	70.2%	20.6%
11. ___ business liability insurance is essential for family child care businesses.	59.2%	73.3%	14.1%
12. What are deductions?	79.6%	85.5%	5.9%
13. A contract is a legal document that talks about ___ and ___.	91.8%	100.0%	8.2%
14. To calculate the Time-Space Percentage, you must first categorize the space in your home as:	63.3%	81.7%	18.4%
15. T/F: A base budget is a first draft of a budget where you assume nothing changes next year.	67.3%	79.4%	12.0%
16. How frequently should you market your business?	94.6%	99.2%	4.7%

Source: AOK Business Series Pre/Post Test