



Meeting a Community Need: Aurora Small Business Development Center Equips Child Care Providers with Valuable Business Skills

Child Care Business Trainings

(2019-2023 PDG B-5 Initiative Strategy 5.1.2)

Child care providers typically enter the field because they love caring for children—not because they have a passion for running a small business. They dedicate their days to nurturing young kids and supporting families, often leaving little time to consider things like business plans or budgets.

Elena Vasconez, Associate Director of the Aurora-South Metro Small Business Development Center, knew that many parts of Aurora were considered child care deserts, where care options are limited or nonexistent. She and her SBDC colleagues heard about an opportunity to partner with local Early Childhood Councils to strengthen child care providers' business practices, supported by Colorado's 2019-2023 PDG B-5 Initiative. She felt this grant opportunity would be a perfect chance to meet the needs of Aurora residents. "We saw that child care providers were fantastic with kids. They love what they do, they offer excellent services, but they don't always run their [home-based] child care like a business," Elena shared. "So we thought it would be a great compliment to offer some business knowledge integrated with the basics of licensing."

The Aurora-South Metro SBDC partnered with the Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council to develop a six-week business training program, available in English and Spanish, for child care providers. They held classes in the evening to accommodate providers' schedules and also offered one-on-one consulting with participants to provide individualized support. The classes covered topics such as pricing, marketing strategies, grant opportunities and budgeting, among others. Participants were also encouraged to set small goals for themselves each week and share their commitments with their fellow classmates, which created a sense of camaraderie and accountability.

"It was very powerful," Elena said. "We've seen a lot of small businesses launched, a lot of small businesses connected to resources—whether it's financial resources, connections to the community, or connections to the Early Childhood Councils. Now people know where to go. I'm very happy about having created that ecosystem for these home-based providers."

About Child Care Business Trainings

Strengthening the business practices of child care providers to ensure they could sustain their businesses was identified as an important need in the 2019 Colorado Shines Brighter Needs Assessment. Colorado leveraged its existing network of Small Business Development Centers, in partnership with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), to launch a series of Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Child Care Business Trainings in 2020. These no-cost training courses were designed to equip home- and center-based providers with vital knowledge on business practices, ensuring their businesses were sustainable to bolster the supply of available child care in their communities. Early Childhood Councils across the state partnered with local SBDCs to offer training courses and business consultation to child care centers and family child care homes. Offered in both English and Spanish, the courses covered business practices such as budgeting and financial management, marketing, pricing, licensing and HR issues, among other topics. Providers who participated could also take advantage of one-on-one business consultation sessions to get personalized support with questions related to running their small businesses. [An evaluation](#) of the courses found a statistically significant change in participants' rating of their knowledge of key business practices. This work was sustained initially with [stimulus funding](#) and now with state funding.

