

Kansas Professional Development Survey Summary Report April 2008

Report prepared by the Institute for Educational Research and Public Service at the University of Kansas.

Executive Summary

During the spring of 2008, the Institute for Educational Research and Public Service at the University of Kansas conducted a survey of agencies and individuals that provide professional development activities to early care and education professionals in the State of Kansas as part of the Child Care Development Fund and the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan. While the survey is not comprehensive in terms of respondents and question content it represents a snapshot of current professional development activities across the State.

Not all respondents answered every question. Sixty-four respondents initiated the online survey, however 45 was the highest number of respondents for any one question. Primary results of the survey follow:

- Minimum qualifications for professional development providers
 - Approximately 50% of respondents indicated that they require a bachelor's degree while 20% required a master's degree.
 - Approximately 30% of respondents required 1-3 years of experience in the field while 25% required 5 or more years of experience. The majority of respondents required some type of experience that did not fit into the categories provided.
- Format of professional development activities
 - Respondents reported offering approximately 1,985 activities in a variety of formats. The three most common formats were: one-time in-person group training, multi-session in-person group training, and one-time individual training at worksite.
- Target populations and actual attendees of professional development activities
 - The three most common professional populations targeted for and who actually attended professional development activities were: family child care providers, child care center personnel (directors, teachers and staff), and Head Start staff.
 - Across respondents, the professional populations that actually attended activities mirrored the target populations as reported by respondents.
- Counties where professional development activities occur
 - Nearly 50% of respondents indicated that they offer professional development activities statewide.
 - There are large areas of the state where no specific activities (beyond activities that are offered statewide) are offered. The largest areas without county-specific professional development are the southwest and north-central regions.

- Topic areas
 - Three most common topic areas for professional development activities are: 1) Health, Safety, and Nutrition; 2) Child Development; and, 3) Interactions with Children.
- Method of planning for content and format of professional development activities
 - The three most commonly reported influences for determining content were: 1) Verbal input from the field; 2) Survey of providers' self-reported needs; and, 3) Federal/state requirements or mandates.
 - The three most commonly reported influences for determining format, including location, method, etc., were: 1) need or interest of child care providers; 2) availability of space; and, 3) geography, i.e. to meet needs of providers in sparsely populated areas.
- Methods used for advertising professional development activities
 - The three most common methods reported for advertising professional development were: 1) E-mail distribution; 2) Word of mouth; and, 3) Newsletters.
- Funding and costs for professional development activities
 - The three most common sources of funding for professional development activities were: 1) Grant funding – State; 2) Participant fees; and, 3) Absorbed by overall agency budget.
 - Forty percent of respondents indicated that there was no cost to participants to attend their professional development activities. Relatedly, over 50% of respondents reported that they do not provide financial support to participants.
- Credits, clock hours, continuing education units, or other types of benefits to participants
 - Approximately 50% of respondents offer clock hours (non-credit) approved by KDHE to participants. Approximately 35% offer credit hours (higher education) or clock hours (non-credit) not submitted to and/or approved by KDHE.
- Evaluation and assessment of professional development activities
 - Over 80% of respondents use participant satisfaction surveys to evaluate or assess professional development activities. Over 60% use successful completion of a task or project and nearly 40% use a pre/post test (knowledge of content) to evaluate or assess activities.
 - The three most commonly reported uses of evaluation or assessment results are: 1) Future planning; 2) Format changes; and, 3) Follow-up with participants.

The full report includes detailed responses to each of the survey questions as well as discussion about the survey results. While not comprehensive, this report offers a current status to compare against both previous strategic plans and the vision for the future system of professional development.

Introduction and Background

Professional development is a focus of every early childhood program in Kansas and is an essential component of a coordinated early childhood system. Programs across the State use professional development to prepare and support early care and education providers. Across programs, however, the definitions and standards for professional development vary, and coordination of the professional development system is limited.

The State Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) application requires that the State have a professional development plan in place to provide a framework for ongoing training and support to early care and education professionals. The CCDF is a program within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Since 2001, the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) has provided the strategic plan and guidance for the professional development activities provided under CCDF. The PDI is funded by the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) and is managed by the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRRRA). In 2007, it was decided that an updated strategic plan was necessary to reflect changes in the landscape of early childhood in the State, align with the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (KECCS) Plan, and coordinate professional development activities across multiple programs.

The Institute for Educational Research and Public Service at the University of Kansas (Institute) manages the KECCS Plan and completed the original environmental scan for KECCS. Based on this experience, SRS requested that the Institute design and administer a survey of professional development activities. The purpose of the Kansas Professional Development Survey was to gather information about what professional development opportunities/activities are available to individuals working with children birth to five years old in Kansas. For the purposes of the survey, professional development was defined in a broad sense to include any method of conveying information to increase the knowledge and capacity of individuals working with young children and families, including but not limited to training, workshops, classes, college coursework, coaching, and technical assistance.

The survey questions were developed by the Institute with substantial input and approval from the Early Learning Coordinating Council (ELCC), which serves as the oversight committee for the KECCS Plan. (See the survey in Appendix A.) The survey was targeted at both individuals and organizations that provide professional development activities. Survey Monkey was used as a means of online data collection. In January 2008, the survey was distributed by e-mail invitation to a list of organizations determined by representatives from KACCRRRA, Kansas Head Start Association, Kansas State Department of Education, and the Institute. Organizations were asked to forward the survey on to individuals and agencies in their networks. No eligibility requirements were established for survey completion. Respondents were asked to complete the survey by March 2008 reflecting on professional development activities over the past year.

Limitations

The Kansas Professional Development Survey has several limitations which should be taken into consideration when reviewing results. The survey is a first step to capture the breadth of activities that are offered in Kansas. The results constitute an environmental scan or snapshot of the current status of professional development. The survey is not comprehensive in terms of respondents and question content. While every attempt was made to be inclusive, not every professional development provider in the State received or completed the survey. Similarly, the questions do not reflect all aspects of professional development activities. In addition, professional development is delivered through a variety of modes and formats. In order to encompass this breadth, a broad definition of professional development was used meaning there may be great variation in the experience and perspective of respondents.

Respondents

The survey was initially sent to 25 individuals representing 14 agencies:

- Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Kansas Children's Service League
- Kansas Department of Commerce
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Kansas Head Start Association
- Kansas Inservice Training System
- Kansas Parents As Teachers Association
- Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
- Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services
- Kansas State Department of Education
- Kansas State University
- Mid-America Regional Council
- National Child Care Information Center, ACF Region VII
- Smoky Hills Public Television

It is not known how many individuals or agencies received the survey as a result of these organizations forwarding it to their networks. As of March 6, 2008, there were 64 respondents. Respondents were asked to provide the name of the agency or organization that sponsors professional development; these responses are provided in Appendix B.

Respondents were allowed to discontinue and then return to the survey if they did not have the information necessary to answer the question available immediately. Because of this, it is likely that 64 is an overestimate of the number of individuals who actually completed the survey. The highest number of respondents for any one question is 45, and this number is probably a better estimate of the sample size of respondents.

Results

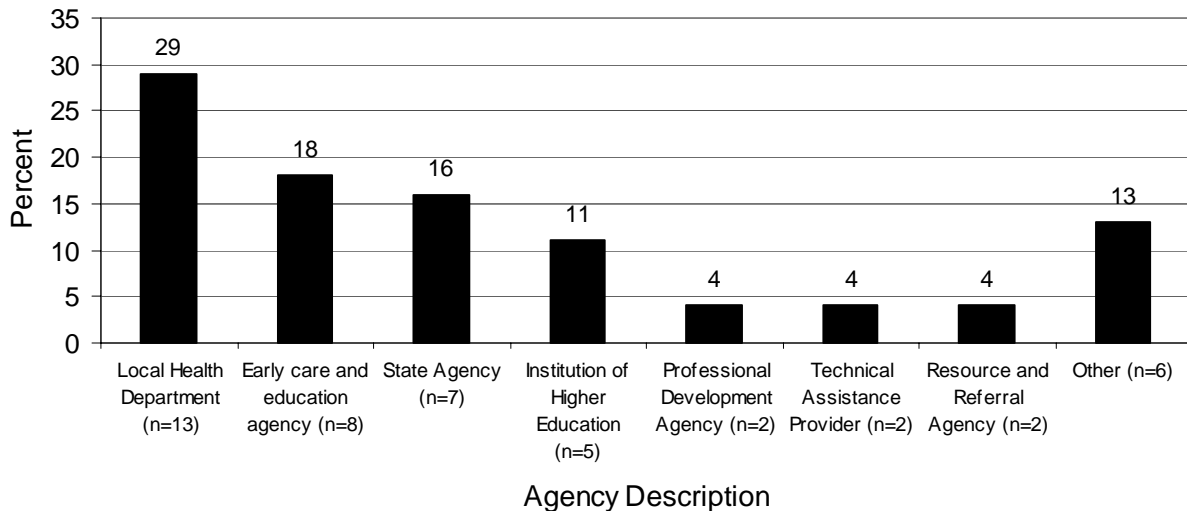
Reporting Considerations

Respondents were not required to answer all questions on the survey; thus, for most questions the number of responses is smaller than the complete sample size. The number of respondents (*n*) is reported for each question. Percentages were rounded for simplicity and thus totals may not equal 100%. For the majority of the report, “agency” and “respondents” are used to refer to both agency and individual respondents.

Respondent Agency Demographics

Of the 64 respondents, 61 (95%) represented an agency or organization and the remainder (*n*=3; 5%) were individual contractors. Forty-five respondents reported on their agency type. A variety of types of agencies were represented by the respondents. Figure 1 demonstrates the number and types of agencies represented.

Figure 1. Respondents by agency type.



Respondents were asked to select the answer that best described their agency. Those who reported “Other” were asked to provide a description. The “Other” category included responses such as professional associations, social services, and agencies that serve multiple roles.

Agencies that responded represented both large and small organizations. Forty-two respondents reported on the size of their agency. Twenty seven (64%) indicated that they employed between one and 20 employees; six (14%) employed 21 to 100; five (12%) employed 101 to 200 employees; four (10%) employed 201 to 300; and one (2%) employed 300 or more. A sum of the number of total employees of agencies responding to this question is 2,794 employees.

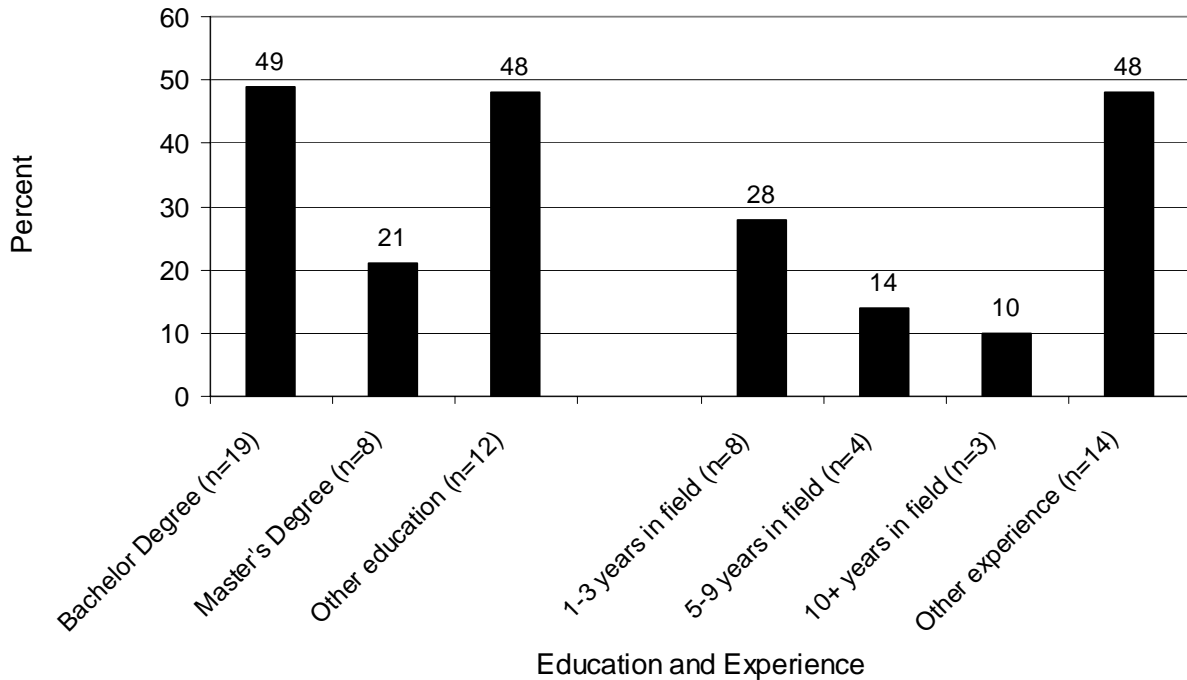
Agencies were also asked to indicate the number of employees who spend greater than (>) or less than (<) 50% of their work time providing professional development. The total of responses to this question is as follows: 310 employees provide professional development less than (<) 50%

of their work hours; 384 employees provide professional development 50% or more of their work time. In addition to regular employees, agencies also provided information about the use of contractors or volunteers for providing professional development. Of the 26 agencies that responded to the question about using contractors, 12 (46%) reported using one to 10 contractors. Of the 21 agencies that responded to the question about using volunteers, 9 (43%) reported one to 30 volunteers.

Professional Development Provider Qualifications

Respondents were asked to indicate the minimum qualifications for individuals or staff that provide professional development on behalf of the agency or organization. Categories were not provided; respondents entered their minimum requirements for education and experience as a narrative. Responses were categorized based on similarities. Thirty-nine respondents indicated their minimum requirements for education and 29 indicated their minimum requirements for field experience. Responses are presented in Figure 2 for both education and field experience requirements.

Figure 2. Minimum qualifications for professional development providers.



Nineteen (49%) agencies required at least a Bachelor degree and eight (21%) required a Masters degree. The remaining 12 (33%) respondents had varying education requirements ranging from a high school diploma to a doctorate. Eight (28%) agencies required one to three years of experience in the field, four (14%) required five to nine years, and three (10%) required 10 or more years. Fourteen (48%) agencies have varying experience requirements including being a child care provider or nursing experience. Thirty out of 40 respondents (75%) required references from individuals that would be providing professional development training on behalf of their agency.

Professional Development Activities and Reach

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of professional development activities their agency provided during the last year (FY07) by activity format. Thirty-six respondents answered this question. Figure 3 reports the percentage of these respondents which provide each format of training. For example, eighty-one percent of respondents offered one-time in-person group training.

Figure 3. Professional development activities by format.

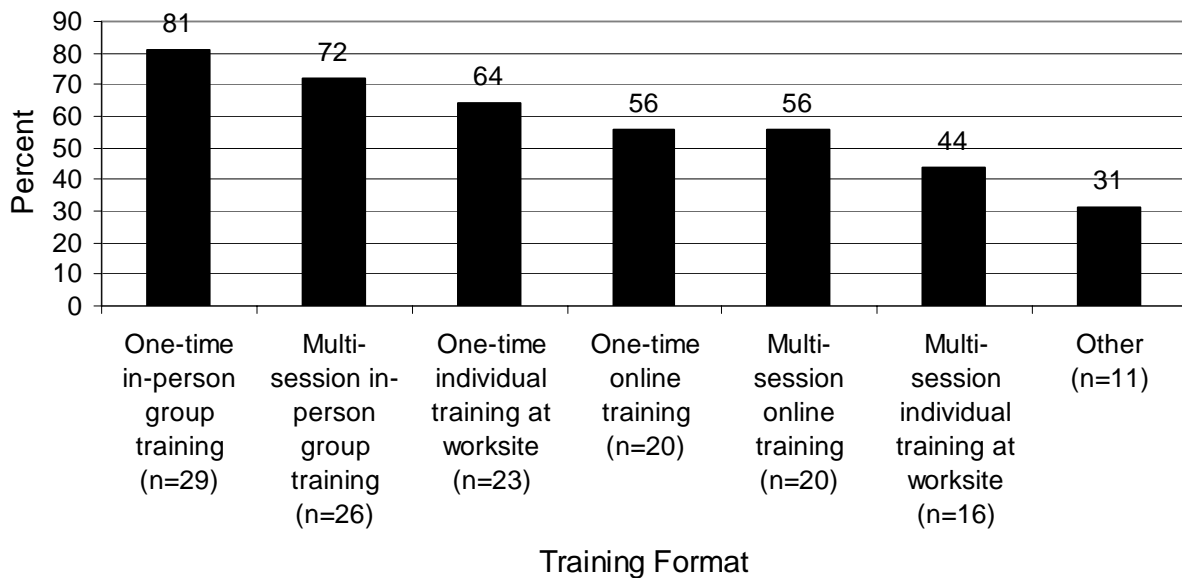


Table 1 reports the number of trainings by format provided by the respondents. For each format type, the range of responses, average, and total is provided. For example, respondents indicated that a total of 581 one-time in-person group trainings were offered. Respondents' answers ranged from "0" one-time in-person group trainings through "100+" one-time in-person group trainings.

Table 1. Range, average, and total of trainings provided by format.

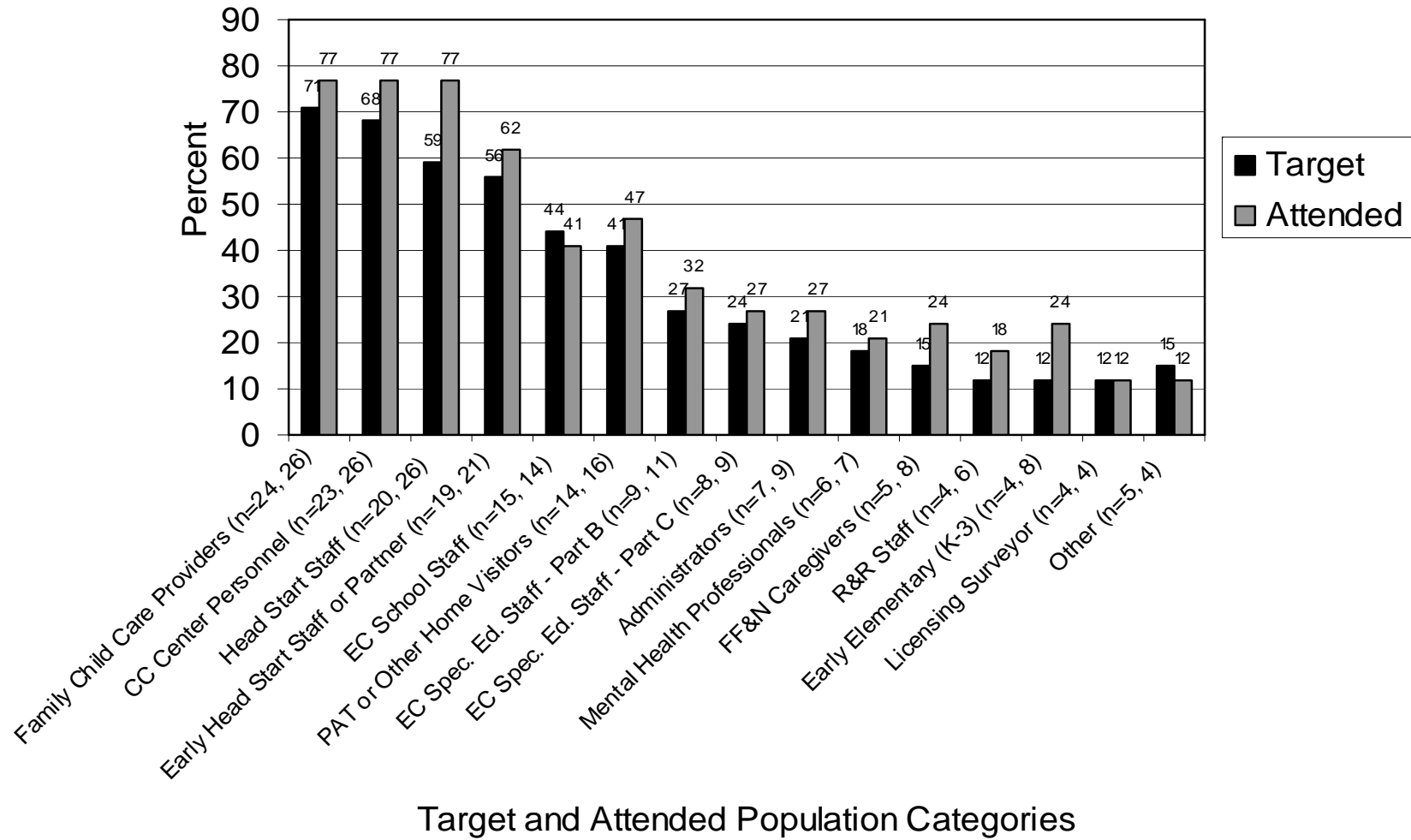
	Range of Responses	Total Trainings (Sum of Responses)
One-time in-person group training (n=29)	0-100+	581
Multi-session in-person group training (n=26)	0-100+	450
One-time online training (n=20)	0-100	133
Multi-session online training (n=20)	0-50+	95
One-time individual training at worksite (n=23)	0-100+	447
Multi-session individual training at worksite (n=16)	0-120	245
Other (n=11)	0-20+	34

If agencies provided training in formats that did not fit the provided categories, respondents selected "Other." The "Other" category included training formats such as one-time conferences (e.g. Governor's Conference for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), summer institutes, conference calls, and interactive television (ITV) sessions.

Respondents were asked to report the number of individuals that participated in professional development activities through their agencies during the past year (FY07). Respondents were asked to use duplicated numbers (e.g. if an individual attended two separate professional development activities, this would count as "2" rather than "1"). Thirty-two respondents provided a number. The range was three to an estimate of more than 4,000. The total was 17,745.

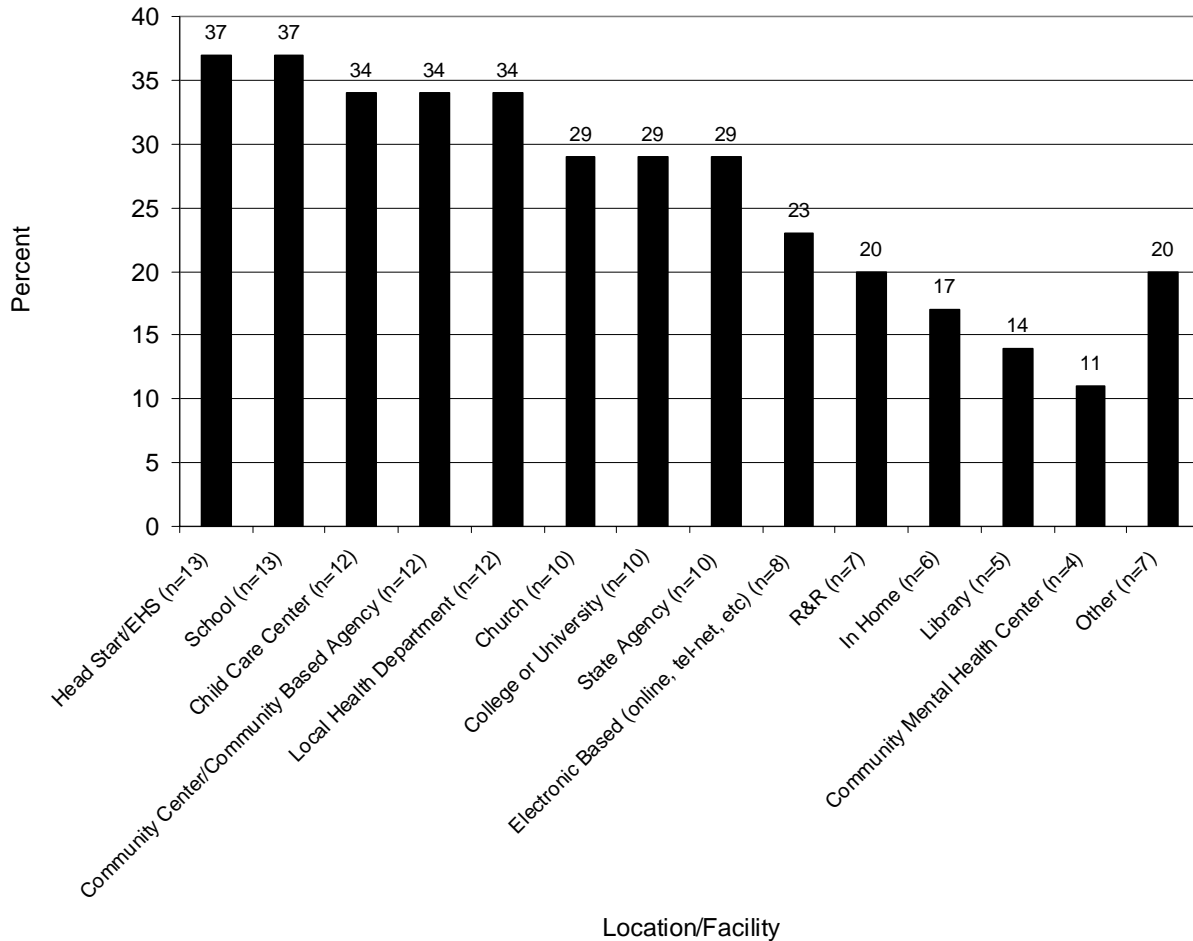
The survey asked respondents to indicate both the target population for professional development activities (black bars) and the professional affiliation of individuals who actually attended (gray bars). Respondents were instructed to select each category that applied to their agency. For example, 24 respondents (71%) indicated that family child care providers were a target audience. Twenty-six respondents (77%) reported that family child care providers actually attended professional development activities provided by their agency. Figure 4 reports responses from the 34 respondents for the target population and the individuals that actually attended professional development activities.

Figure 4. Professional development target population and actual attendees.



Respondents were asked to provide information about the types of facilities where professional development activities were provided in the last year (FY07). Thirty-five respondents provided this information. Figure 6 depicts the breakdown of types of facilities. Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply.

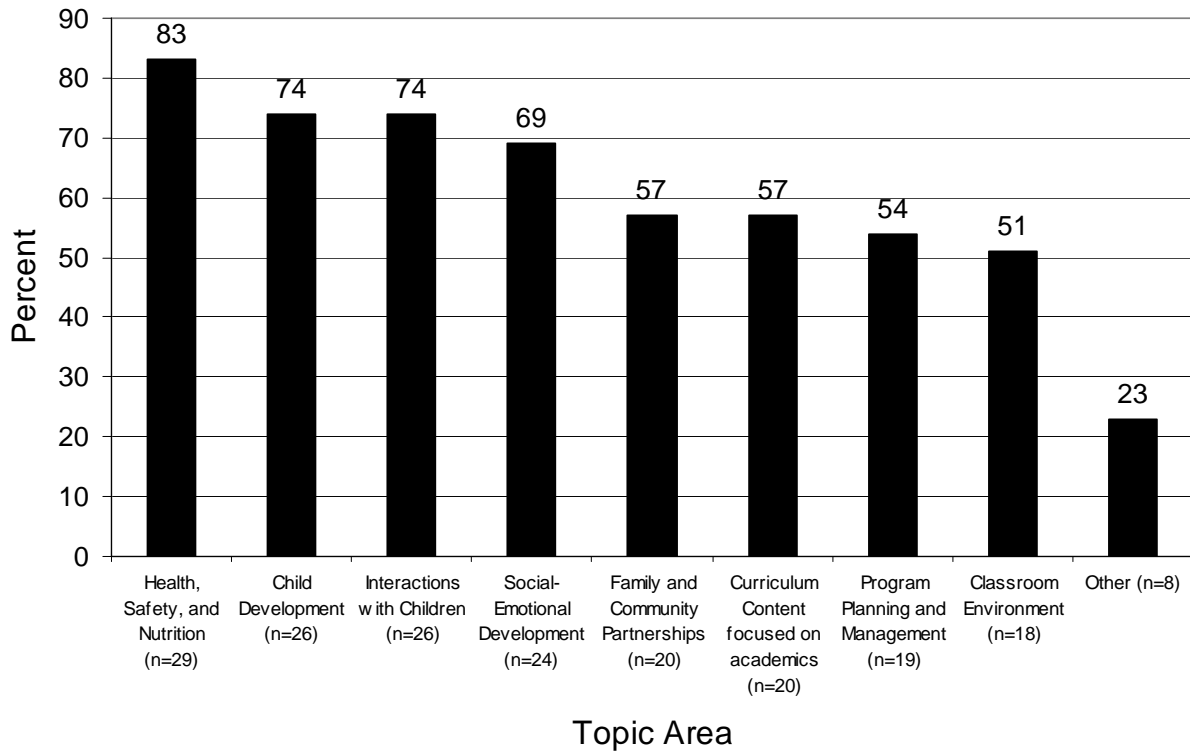
Figure 6. Facilities used for professional development activities.



Professional Development Activity Content

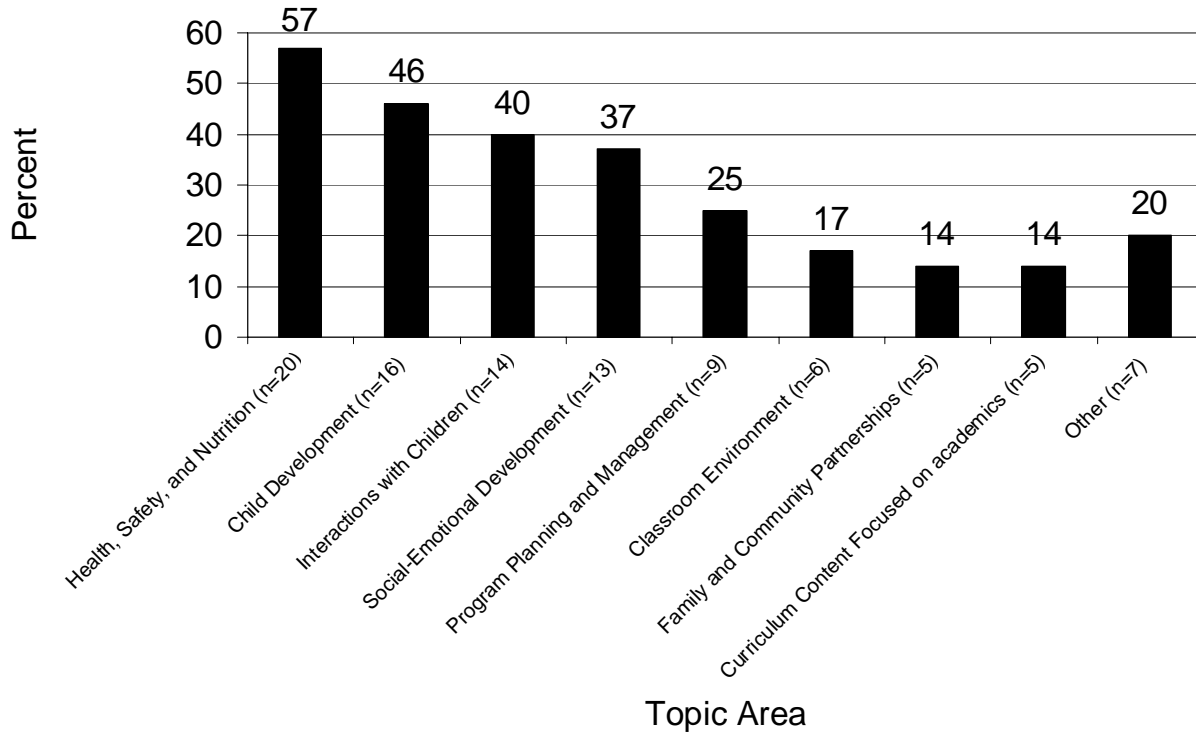
Respondents were asked to indicate the topics and/or core competency areas that were covered by professional development activities offered by their agency in the last year (FY07). The thirty-five respondents selected all of the content areas that applied. The results are displayed in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Topic areas for professional development activities.



Respondents were then asked to indicate the **three** most frequently covered topics in their professional development activities.

Figure 8. Three most frequently covered professional development topic areas.

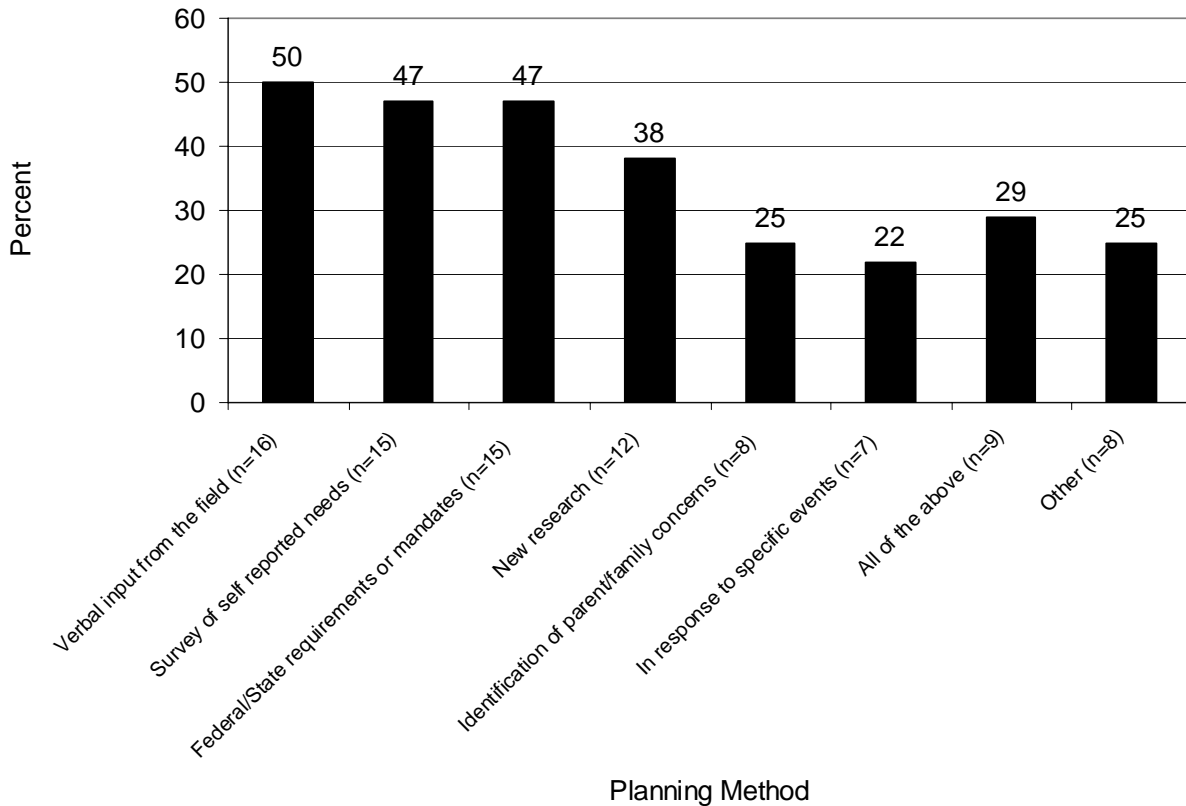


The three most frequently covered topic areas include: 1) Health, Safety, and Nutrition (57%); 2) Child Development (46%); and, 3) Interactions with Children (40%). The “Other” category for the previous two questions included responses such as orientation, child abuse and neglect reporting, and program and state quality standards.

Professional Development Planning and Advertising

Respondents were asked to describe how planning for content of professional development activities occurs. Responses from thirty-two respondents are represented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Method of planning for content of professional development activities

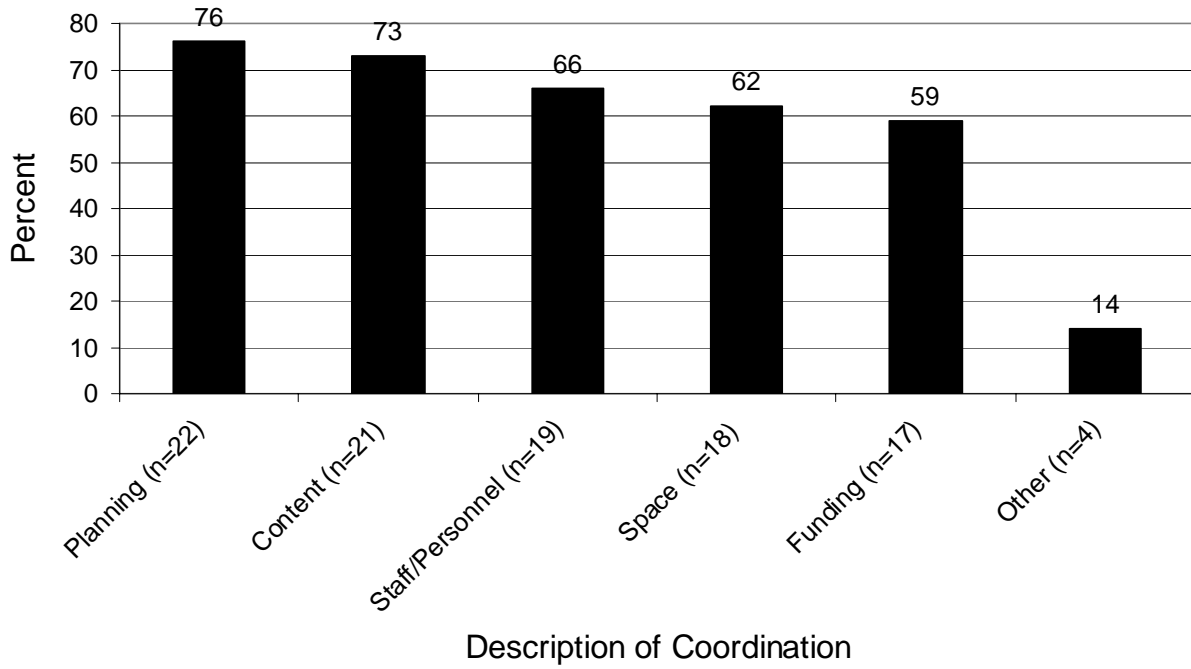


Respondents were asked to select all planning methods that apply. The most frequent methods reported for planning content include: 1) Verbal input from the field (50%); 2) Survey of providers’ self-reported needs (47%); and, 3) Federal/State requirements or mandates (47%). The “Other” category included responses such as program and community self-assessments and identification of most frequent violations of child care licensing.

Respondents (n=32) indicated that the format (location, method, etc.) of professional development activities was determined by the need or interest of child care providers (n=13; 41%), the availability of space (n=7; 22%), geography (to meet the needs of providers in sparsely populated areas) (n=6; 19%), and the cost of space (n=3; 9%). The majority of respondents indicated that all of these were determining factors in selecting format of professional development activities (n=14; 44%). Six respondents (19%) identified “Other” factors such as availability of technology, mandated training, and budget considerations.

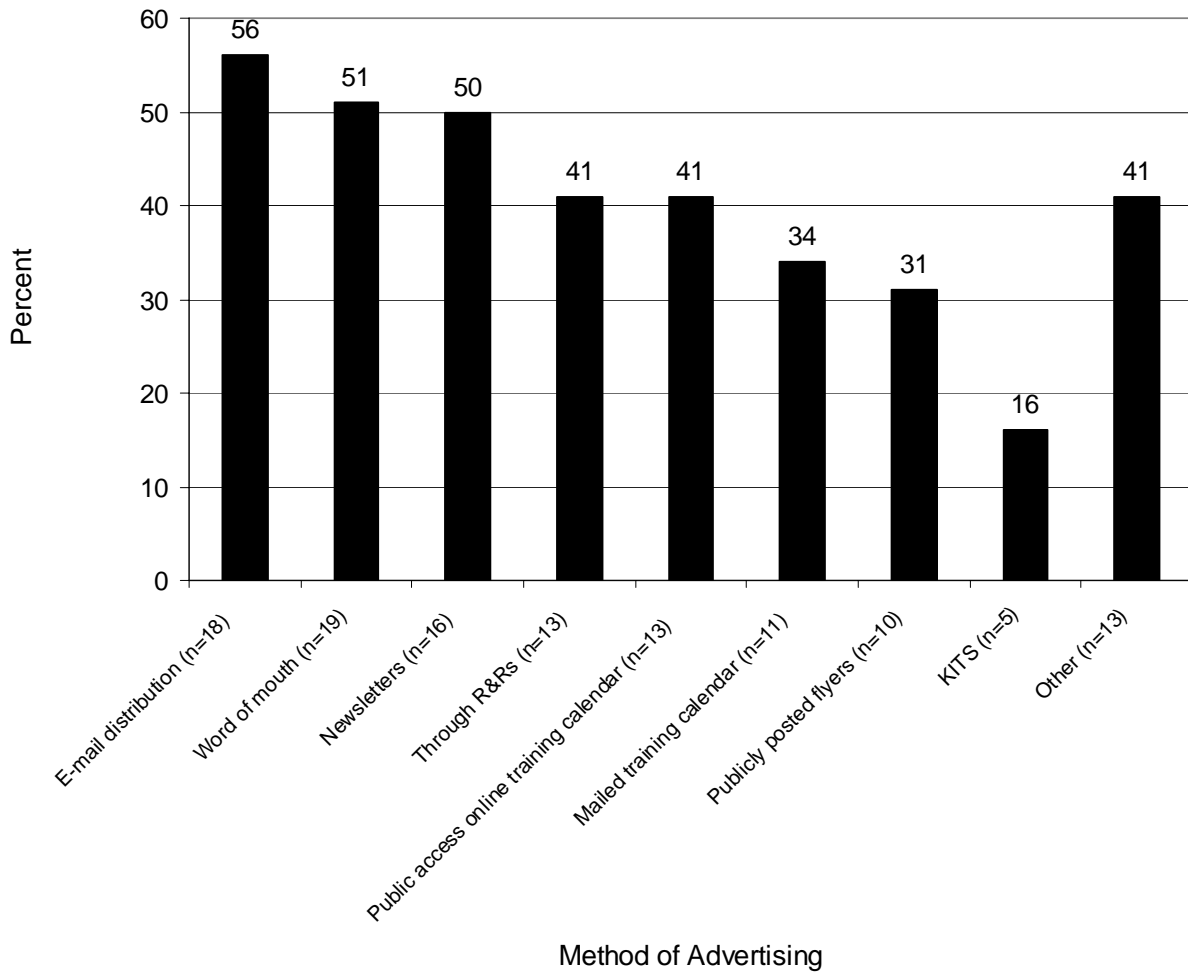
Twenty-nine (94%) of thirty-one respondents also indicated that they coordinate with other agencies or organizations to offer professional development activities. Respondents were asked to select the nature of this coordination; Figure 9 provides the results.

Figure 9. Nature of coordination of professional development activities.



Respondents were asked to indicate methods that were used to advertise professional development activities during the last year (FY07). Thirty-two respondents answered this question. Respondents were asked to select all methods of advertising that applied to their agency; results are presented in Figure 10.

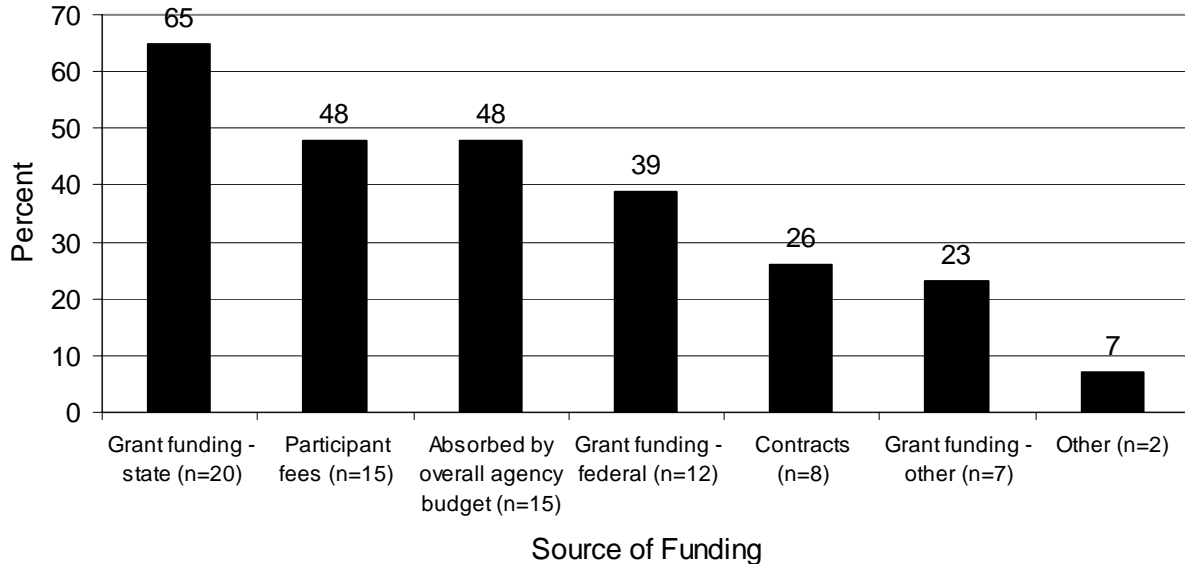
Figure 10. Methods used for advertising professional development activities.



Professional Development Costs and Benefits

Respondents were asked to describe how professional development activities are funded. Thirty-one respondents provided responses, which are reported in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Source of funding for professional development activities.

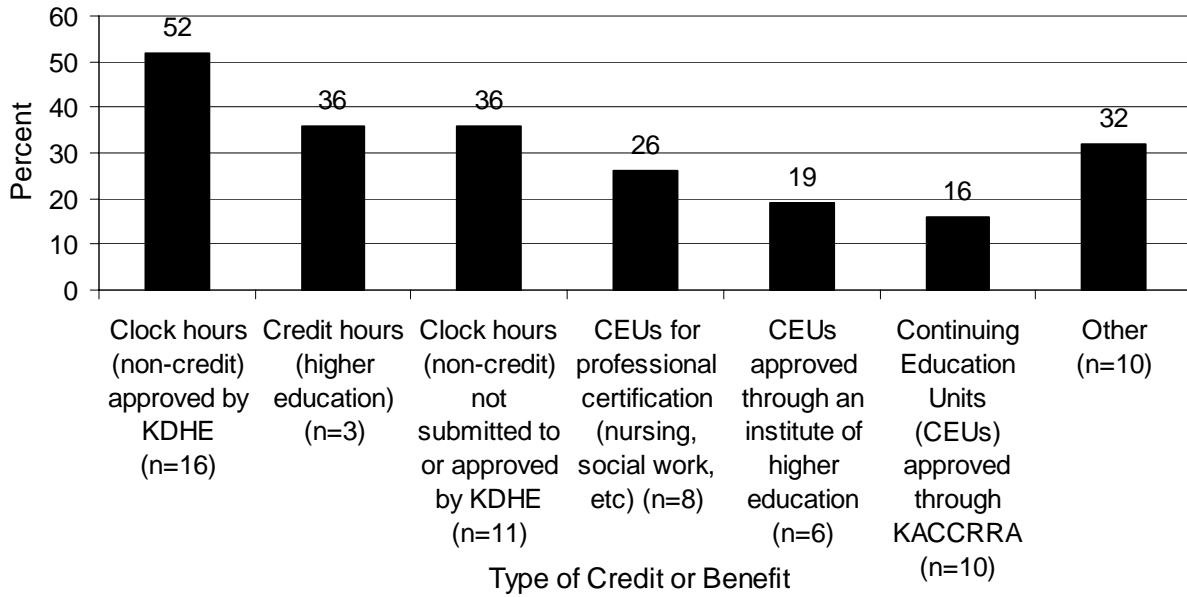


Respondents ($n=30$) indicated the average cost to participants to attend their professional development activities. The majority ($n=12$; 40%) reported that there was no cost to participants. The remaining responses were: \$1-10 ($n=3$; 10%); \$11-20 ($n=4$; 13%); \$21-30 ($n=3$; 10%), \$31-50 ($n=2$; 7%); more than \$50 ($n=6$; 20%).

Additionally, respondents ($n=31$) provided information about financial support offered to offset participant costs for professional development activities. Financial support reported included: transportation reimbursement ($n=5$; 16%); stipends ($n=4$; 12%); and, substitute child care providers ($n=3$; 10%). The majority ($n=17$; 55%) reported that they did not provide any financial support to participants. The “Other” methods of financial support ($n=9$; 29%) included scholarships and grants, TEACH, and WAGES\$.

The survey asked respondents whether participants in professional development activities offered by their agency were eligible to receive credits, clock hours, continuing education units, or other types of benefit. Thirty-one respondents answered this question and Figure 12 reports the results.

Figure 12. Type of credit or benefit to participants in professional development activities.



Respondents were asked to indicate how their agency is involved in the recruitment and retention of professionals in early care and education. Responses regarding recruitment ($n=31$) are presented in Figure 13. Responses regarding retention ($n=30$) are reported in Figure 14.

Figure 13. Type of recruitment activities.

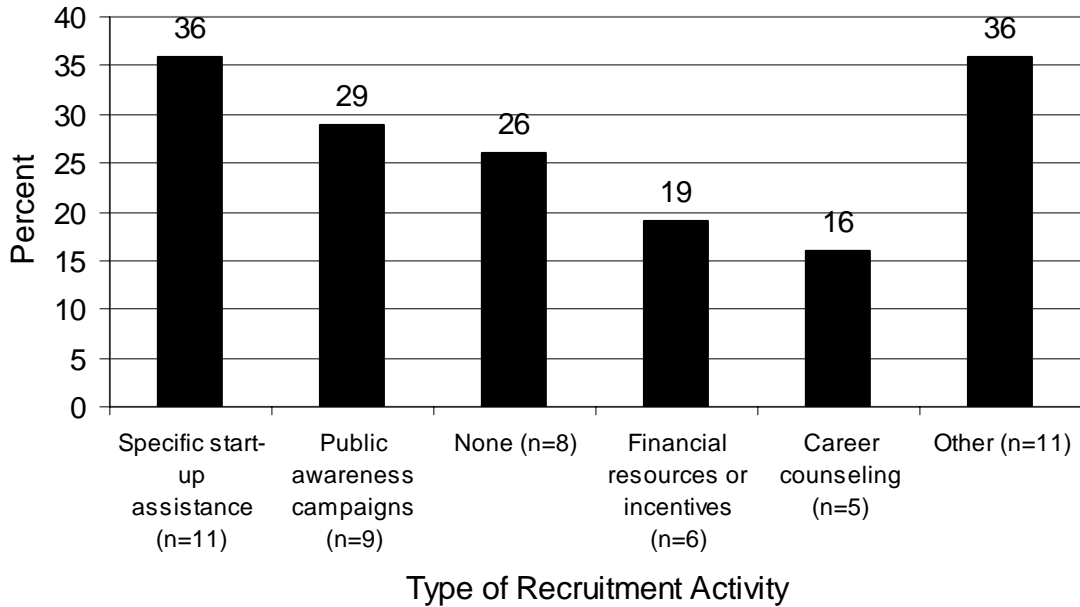
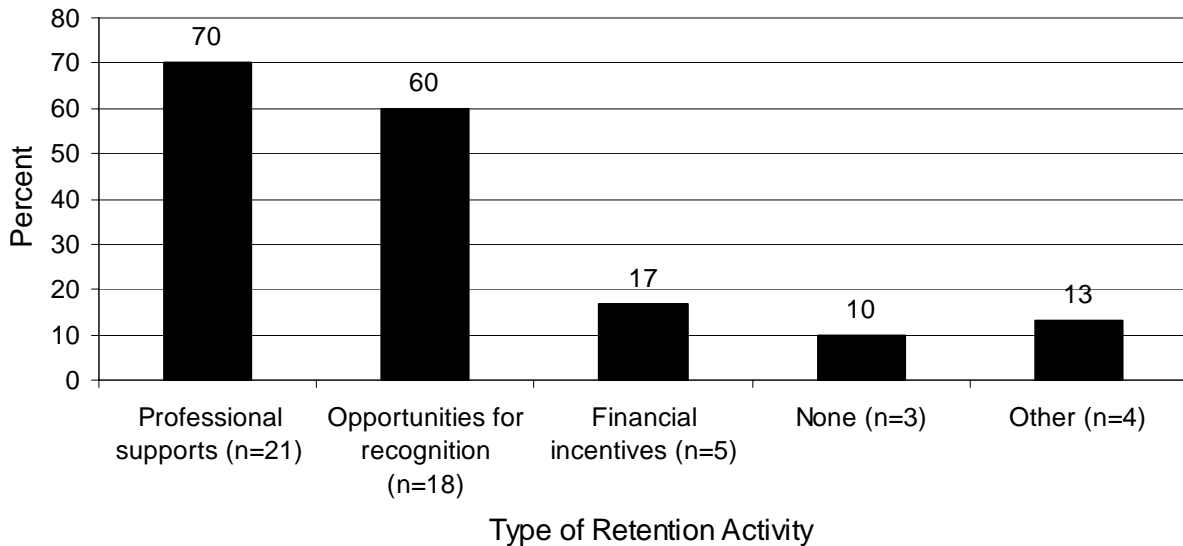


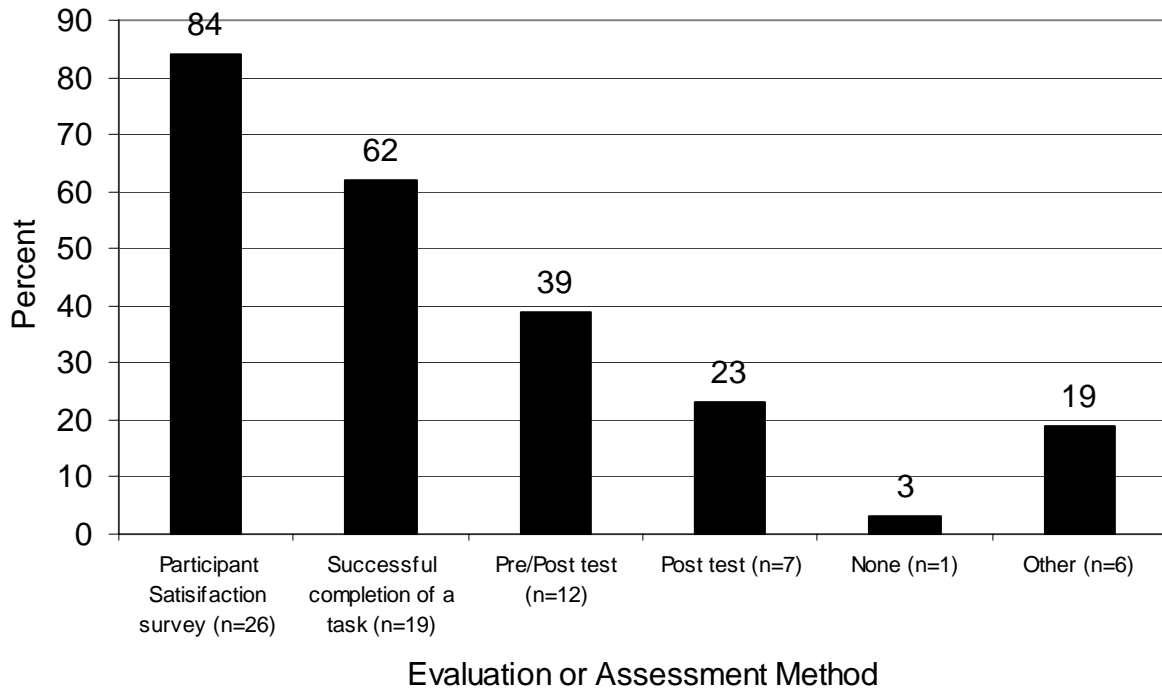
Figure 14. Type of retention activity.



Professional Development Activity Evaluation

Respondents were asked to describe how they evaluated or assessed their professional development activities. Figure 15 provides an overview of the type of evaluations or assessments used by respondents ($n=31$). In addition to the provided categories, respondents indicated the following “Other” methods: observation, quality standards reporting, and staff self-reflection.

Figure 15. Professional development evaluation and assessment methods.



Respondents were asked to provide information about how evaluations and assessments are used by their agency. Of 31 respondents, 87% ($n=27$) indicated future planning, 71% ($n=22$) reported format changes, 55% ($n=17$) indicated follow up with participants, and 32% ($n=10$) indicated fulfilling requirement for Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) approval. Nineteen percent ($n=6$) responded “Other” uses of evaluations and assessments focused around quality improvement.

Respondents were asked to provide information about long-term results or proven outcomes of their professional development activities. Twenty respondents replied and the themes of their responses include:

- Preparation and strengthening of high quality, educated workforce
- Increased knowledge base and skill of child care providers
- Increase in recruitment and retention of early care and education workforce
- In-person interactions improves training and allows for observation
- Consistency across staff and partners
- Program improvement over time on quality standards
- Increase in availability and quality of services to children with disabilities

Discussion

Responses to the Kansas Professional Development Survey are indicative of the complex nature of professional development service delivery throughout the State. Results provide a starting point for further discussion and planning among professional development providers and supporting agencies to guide collaboration and coordination of policies, practices, and services.

Particular areas that may be beneficial to explore:

- Minimum qualifications for providers of professional development
 - While most respondents indicated that they do have minimum requirements for professional development providers, there is not consistency in these expectations. The substantial endorsement of the “Other” response to these questions indicates a need to look more closely at universal or consistent categories for education and experience of professional development providers.
- Availability of professional development activities throughout the State
 - The counties that do not have additional activities beyond activities that are available statewide tend to be clustered together resulting in large areas of the State that may lack adequate access to professional development opportunities. These areas are southwest and north-central Kansas.
- Most frequently covered topic areas of professional development activities
 - The areas commonly discussed as important components of high quality early care and education programs (e.g. Classroom Environment, Family & Community Partnerships, Curriculum Content focused on academic skill development) were the **least** frequently covered topic areas for professional development activities. While it is understandable that the most frequently covered topics be driven by licensing requirements, consideration might be given to ways to increase the availability of training on these components of high quality programs.
- Funding of professional development activities
 - Top funding sources listed were Grant funding – State, Participant Fees, and Absorbed by Overall Agency Budget. Exploration of other grant funding, braiding and blending funding, or other financial support may be useful to future work.
- Method of advertising professional development activities
 - Responses indicate that not all agencies are using universally available, coordinated advertising or notification options. It may be beneficial to explore increased coordination of outreach about professional development activities.
- Evaluation and assessment of professional development
 - The most common method cited for evaluating professional development activities was Participant Satisfaction Surveys. As funding sources require increased accountability and demonstrated outcomes, it is important to consider adding alternative types of evaluation that address these requirements and show the effectiveness of professional development activities.
 - While many respondents provided an answer to the question about long-term results and proven outcomes of their professional development activities,

almost none of the responses reflected actual outcomes. Education may be needed about expectations related to results and outcomes, and resources to facilitate implementation of improved outcome measures.

Results of the Kansas Professional Development Survey provide a snapshot of the current state of professional development in Kansas. While not comprehensive, this report offers a current status to compare against both previous strategic plans and the vision for the future system of professional development.