

**Office of Early Care and Education, First Five  
Stipend for Training And Retention (STAR) Project  
Analysis of Retention and Training**

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Office of Early Care and Education, First 5 STAR Project collected surveys from program participants at the end of the program year 2003. Survey questions asked participants about their likelihood of remaining in the childcare field, their satisfaction with current work conditions, and barriers to training. Participants were also asked about other impacts of participating in the STAR Project.

Participants

A total of 421 STAR participants completed the survey. Almost two-thirds are returning applicants (n = 259, 63%). Most of the respondents are between the ages of 36 and 50 (n = 179, 43%). Almost half are Hispanic (n = 203, 49%) with Whites comprising 38% of the group (n = 158). Communities served by most of the survey respondents include Santa Maria (36%), Santa Barbara (25%) and Lompoc (11%). (See Table 1 and Attachment 1)

Retention in Childcare Field

Former participants were asked to identify rewards that keep them in the early care and education profession. The most common reward reported is the enjoyment of working with young children and families. Following this, opportunities for advancement and growth and creative opportunities were endorsed by more than half of the respondents. (See Attachment 2)

Almost three-quarters (n = 292, 72%) report that they have not considered leaving the field of early care and education, while 28% (n = 116) report they have considered leaving the profession. When asked how likely it is that they would leave the field in the next three years, only 21 people state that they will “definitely leave” (n = 7 or 2%) or “probably leave” (n = 14 or 3%), compared to 338 who report that they will “probably stay” (78 or 19%) or “definitely stay” (n = 260 or 37%) in the field. Of those who report that they have considered leaving the field (n = 116, 28%), only 15% said they would “probably” or “definitely leave” in the next three years; 19% (n = 22) “do not know”.

The most common reasons provided for leaving the profession include low pay (n = 233, 55%), lack of benefits (n = 119, 28%) and balance between family, school and work (n = 115, 27%). (See Table 2) This is an important program finding in that one of the objectives of the STAR Project is to provide monetary incentives to promote professional development so that childcare providers can advance and command a higher salary. For those who will “probably” or

	N	Percent
Returning applicant	259	62.9%
First-time applicant	153	37.1%
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	43	10.3%
26-35	106	25.5%
36-50	179	43.0%
51-65	83	20.0%
65+	5	1.2%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic	203	49.0%
Hmong	3	0.7%
Filipino	5	1.2%
African-American	11	2.6%
Asian	4	1.0%
Native American	2	0.5%
White	158	38.2%
Other	28	6.8%
<b>Work Location</b>		
Center-based	288	77.6%
Family-based	83	22.4%

“definitely” leave, low wages (n = 10) and balance between family, school and work (n = 5) are cited most often, though the number reporting they will leave is small (n = 21). Of note, three cited they will not stay because they are retiring.

Due to the small number of respondents who report the possibility of leaving the field, no statistical comparisons such as demographics, workplace type (center- vs. family-based) or program type (e.g., federally-funded) could be made with those not leaving the profession.

	N	Percent
Low Pay	233	55.3
No Benefits	119	28.3
Inadequate Training	35	8.3
Poor Working Conditions	67	15.9
Perception Of The Non-ECE Community	39	9.3
Balance Between Family, School And Work	115	27.3
Housing	46	10.9
Other Reasons	67	15.9

### Work Conditions and Satisfaction

Over three-quarters of survey respondents work in a center-based program (n = 288, 77%). In general, federally-funded programs are the most common (29%) followed by private, non-profit (19%) and state-funded (17%) programs. Of those in center-based care, just over half of the respondents are in federally-funded or state-funded programs. A vast majority of those in family-based care are working in a private for-profit or non-profit program. A smaller percent report working in other types of environments such as college affiliated centers and faith-based programs. (See Table 3)

	Center-based	Family-based	Total*
Federally-funded	89 32.1%	2 3.0%	91 26.5%
Private, For-profit	17 6.1%	40 59.7%	57 16.6%
Faith-based	25 9.0%	2 3.0%	27 7.8%
State-Funded	60 21.7%	0 .0%	60 17.4%
Private, Non-profit	38 13.7%	22 32.8%	60 17.4%
College Affiliated	29 10.5%	0 .0%	29 8.4%
Blended Government	11 4.0%	1 1.5%	12 3.5%
Other Blended	8 2.9%	0 .0%	8 2.3%

\* totals for workplace programs may not match narrative due to missing responses on some items

Generally, respondents are satisfied with their current working conditions. Overall quality of the program and the physical work environment are aspects of the workplace that respondents rated most highly. Though just under half are “satisfied” with their current wages, only 16% are “very satisfied” and 38% are “slightly” or “not satisfied.” (See Table 4)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Wages	15.6%	46.4%	25.7%	12.3%
Training Opportunities	36.5%	47.8%	13.8%	2.0%
Flexibility of Schedule	34.1%	44.9%	14.4%	6.6%
Physical Environment	41.6%	48.0%	8.6%	1.8%
Overall quality	43.1%	50.0%	4.6%	2.3%

*“One needs to take added professional growth courses and we are lucky to have this stipend.”  
Participant*

When comparing the type of program a respondent works in and their satisfaction with their work conditions, two statistically significant relationships are found. Those in center-based programs have a higher proportion of respondents reporting they are “very satisfied” with the flexibility in their schedule or hours<sup>1</sup> and with the physical environment of their workplace<sup>2</sup> when compared to participants in family-based programs. Also statistically significant, those workplaces with private, for-profit and blended funding sources report greater levels of *dissatisfaction* with the flexibility of their schedule or hours<sup>3</sup>.

### Barriers to Training

An important aspect of the STAR Project is to provide training opportunities to increase the education of childcare providers in Santa Barbara County. More participants (n = 140, 44%) use Creative Curriculum in their programs than other curricula, though almost 40% (n = 124) report using an eclectic curriculum. Very few (n = 12, 4%) use High Scope. Other curricula, as reported by 14% of the survey participants, include Desired Results (n = 8), developmental-based (n = 7), RIE (n = 7) and theme-based (n = 5). This suggests that training in the Creative curriculum may be a priority in future planning. The survey also collected data regarding barriers to participants taking classes or workshops to improve their training.

Lack of time (n = 170), classes offered during business hours (n = 154) and inconvenient times (n=119) are the most often cited difficulties encountered in taking classes or workshops. A few (n = 18) note that the cost of books or supplies, medical reasons, and paperwork are barriers to taking a class.

	N	Percent
Lack of Transport	12	2.9
Classes too far away	92	21.9
Lack of childcare	40	9.5
Lack of available time	170	40.4
Lack of time off work	102	24.2
Inconvenient times	119	28.3
Cost of classes	90	21.4
Classes held during work	154	36.6
Classes not offered	49	11.6

Approximately 11% of respondents (n = 42) report that there was a class they needed to move up the Child Development Permit matrix that is not available in their community. The communities in which these participants live were varied, but areas in which at least five participants report they have no access to a needed class are Santa Maria (n = 13), Lompoc (n = 10), Los Alamos (n = 9) and Goleta (n = 5). Almost two-thirds (n = 256, 64%) state they went outside the community to attend classes and training and if on-line ECS classes were available; 75% (n = 283) report they would enroll in the course.

### Program Impact

A large majority of respondents agree the STAR Project had a positive impact on them (n = 322, n = 87%). The STAR Project provided a number of trainings and activities to promote quality childcare included training, stipends and other supports. A majority of respondents strongly agree that the following program outcomes occurred:

- Awareness of professional and development opportunities (70%)
- Feeling more respected as a professional (67%)
- Improvement in the quality of the classroom and teaching (63%)
- Increased interest in staying in the child care field (62%)

<sup>1</sup> Chi-square test, p<.01 ( $X^2 = 12.46$ , df = 3)

<sup>2</sup> Chi-square test, p<.04 ( $X^2 = 8.15$ , df = 3)

<sup>3</sup> Chi-square test, p=.03 ( $X^2 = 15.63$ , df = 7)

- Encouragement to return to school (57%)
- Significant impact on household income (56%)

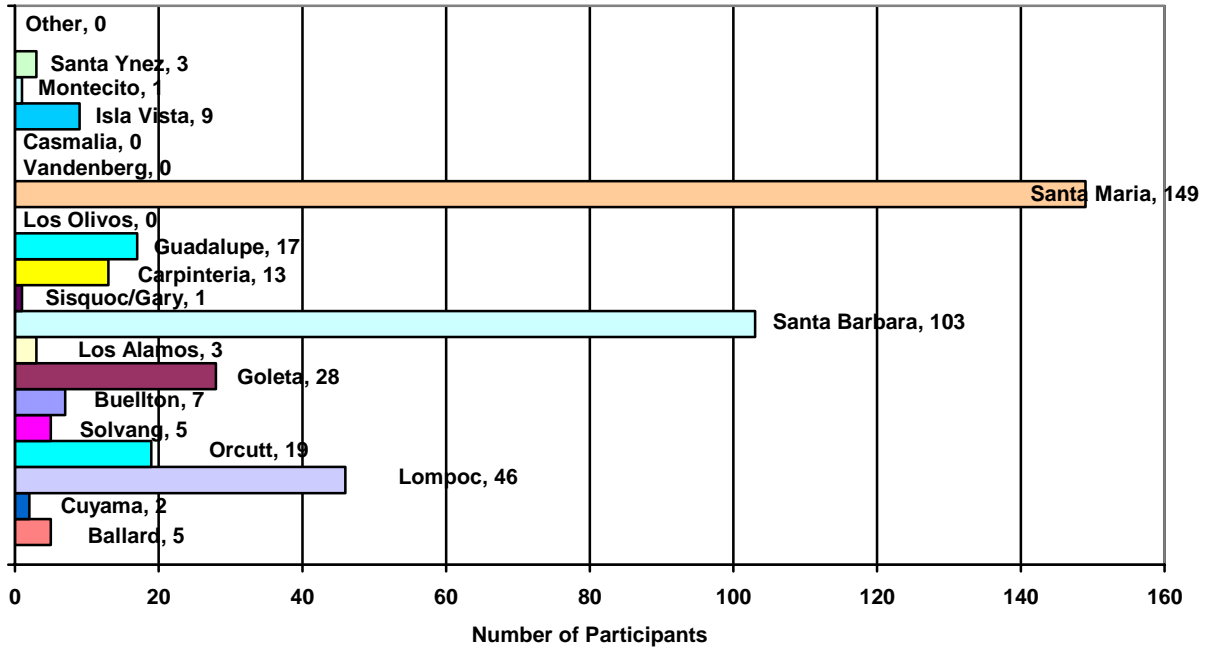
In total, over two-thirds of respondents (n = 241, 68%) note that they used a portion of their stipend for on-going professional development, while 26 report that they did not. Of the center-based program staff, 89% (n = 175) utilized their funds for professional development while 11% (n = 21) did not. Of the family-based childcare staff, 93% (n = 39) utilized their funds for professional development while 7% (n = 3) did not.

It appears that a greater proportion of first-time applicants use their stipends for professional development than do returning applicants. Almost all (n = 21, 97%) first-time applicants staff utilized their funds for professional development and only 1 did not; while 89% (n = 206) of returning applicants staff utilized their funds for professional development and 11% (n = 25) did not.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
STAR has had a positive impact	263 80.7%	58 17.8%	5 1.5%	0 0.0%
Trainings helped improve quality of classroom and teaching	228 63.0%	77 21.3%	6 1.7%	0 0.0%
Increased awareness	259 70.2%	76 20.6%	3 0.8%	3 0.8%
Respected as a professional	245 66.9%	74 20.2%	9 2.5%	1 0.3%
Interest in child care field	225 61.8%	83 22.8%	11 3.0%	3 0.8%
Stipend had significant impact	203 55.9%	61 16.8%	15 4.1%	4 1.1%
Encouraged to return to school	205 56.9%	65 18.1%	16 4.4%	9 2.5%
Used stipend for development	184 51.7%	57 16.0%	11 3.1%	15 4.2%
Used stipend for benefits	86 24.4%	43 12.2%	27 7.7%	52 14.8%
Used stipend to pay off debts	100 28.4%	68 19.3%	22 6.3%	41 11.6%
Used stipend to pamper	98 27.8%	89 25.3%	16 4.5%	39 11.1%

# Attachment 1

## Communities Served



## Attachment 2

### Rewards of Early Care and Education Profession

