



While directors felt that educated teachers are best for children, only 3 out of 65 directors indicated that it was important that “training for center’s teaching staff be linked to a career pathway for the teachers.” See Table 2. Forty-three directors indicated that it was not important at all. In the focus groups, the directors felt that training and education are equally important, but that education needs to be mandated by licensing. Directors also expressed a concern that educated staff would leave for other employment.

Table 2

How important is it that training for your center’s teaching staff be linked to a career pathway for the teacher? (select one)

Choice	Private, For Profit		Faith Based		Other		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very Important	1	3.2	1	6.7	1	5.6	3	4.7
Somewhat Important	7	22.6	6	40.0	5	27.8	18	28.1
Not Important	23	74.2	8	53.3	12	66.7	43	67.2
<b>Total</b>	31	100.0	15	100.0	18	100.0	64	100.0

As indicated above, directors appear to value training, but a career pathway for practitioners is not important.. When asked how they supported employees’ educational goals, “pay workshop fees” was the most frequently selected choice. “Participate in TEACH” was the least frequently checked choice. See Table 3. TEACH is a scholarship program for early education practitioners who wish to obtain either the Child Development Associate credential or work towards an AS degree in early childhood education, both career pathway initiatives. SEEK is another scholarship program, but this program scholarships both informal training and formal education. See Table 3.

Table 3

How do you support your employees’ educational goals? (check all that apply)

Choice	Private, For Profit		Faith Based		Other		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Pay workshop fees	22	68.8	12	80.0	12	66.7	46	70.8
Provide release time to attend classes	24	75.0	7	46.7	8	44.4	39	60.0
Provide career planning	18	56.3	8	53.3	10	55.6	36	55.4
Participate in SEEK	19	59.4	4	26.7	8	44.4	31	47.7
Provide bonuses	12	37.5	2	13.3	6	33.3	20	30.8
Participate in T.E.A.C.H.	10	31.3	2	13.3	5	27.8	17	26.2
							65	

A little over half of the respondents indicated that they supported employee’s educational goals by providing career planning (Table 3). At the same time in answer to a question asking them to rate 11 possible barriers to training, 35 said a major barrier was “not knowing what education and training was available.” Eighteen indicated that this was a minor barrier, and 7 said it was not a barrier. In addition, 25 directors indicated that “difficulty locating appropriate training” was a major barrier to training. See Table 4. These results are clarified in the focus group where the directors were unified in their request for one central calendar/website that would consolidate all of the training/education available.

Table 4 below indicates what directors perceive as barriers to staff participation in training. Directors were concerned that training was of poor quality and that it was not relevant. The focus group participants indicated that training should be current, age-specific, practical and applicable to the field. They also requested that the training be hands-on and that it result in changes in behavior at the worksite.

Table 4

When your staff participates in training, to what extent do the following issues represent barriers to their participation?

<b>Question 13</b>	<b>Major Barrier %</b>	<b>No Barrier %</b>
Don't know what education and training is available	59.3	11.9
Training does not increase earnings	54.2	15.3
Poor quality of training or poor trainer	46.6	17.2
Available training topics not relevant	45.8	18.6
Distance (time needed to travel to training)	41.7	31.7
Difficulty locating appropriate training	41.0	21.3
Inconvenient training times	34.4	23
Cost of Training	33.9	22
Location (place/facility where training is held)	31.1	23
No substitutes to take the place of staff	26.7	48.3
Conflicts with family/home demands on staff	15.3	49.2

### **Conclusions**

The results have implications and provide support for the creation of a career development system in early care and education that will help entering and current practitioners make the most of their potential. It is apparent that information about training options is not always available, accessible, or appropriate to an individual's needs. The Early Childhood Registry will soon be implementing a calendar where training events can be searched by city, content area, and trainer. Links to local, regional and national early childhood professional organizations and their conferences will also be available. However, plans must be developed now to market this to all early care and education practitioners in the county as a single place to find complete information about training.

Many directors provide career counseling to their staff. If directors are to adequately serve as career counselors, materials, resources, and training on how to use them must be offered. Information is already available on the varied roles in different settings in the field and the pathways for preparation for each of them in a document titled "Career Pathways in Child Development: A Guide for Becoming an Early Education Professional in Palm Beach County." This information addresses all levels of professional preparation. The material has been distributed in the county, but nevertheless the directors participating in the focus group were unaware of these materials and expressed delight upon receiving copies.

Effort is underway in the county to develop an agreed-upon set of core competencies for early childhood practitioners at different stages of professional development. Training will be built around these core knowledge areas and competencies, and it will be possible for participants to map their mastery of competencies and to plan next steps in their development. This will be true whether the training is community-based/not for credit or for college credit. Directors, though,

will need support and training on how to use these core competencies in mapping career pathways for practitioners. Kentucky has developed a training series for directors which might be adapted for use in Palm Beach County.

It was interesting that the center directors felt that a barrier to participating in training was training of poor quality, and that training did not transfer from the classroom to the workplace. This supports the current initiative to develop core competencies and a trainer and training quality assurance system. Train the Trainer courses are under development now that will include principles of learning, barriers to learning, ethics and professionalism, assessment strategies, learning styles/cultural differences, designing and planning presentations, strategies for instruction/group dynamics and activities, creating and maintaining positive learning climates, and effecting change in behavior.

The survey results raise interesting questions and provide ideas for future surveys. First, the distinction between training, education, and career pathways needs to be made. It might be helpful to see if directors understand these distinctions and if they have knowledge of programs such as TEACH, SEEK, and WAGES. It would be useful to know which directors would like more information on professional development, and if any would be interested in workshops on the topic. Finally, it is quite likely that directors perceive barriers to training differently from their staff. Future surveys should link director's responses to those of their staff for easy comparison.

In conclusion, the director survey confirmed the need for creating a career development system. Current initiatives are appropriate and responsive to identified needs. However, it is apparent that a major marketing initiative will be needed to disseminate the word and motivate directors to participate.