

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

Helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion



Results from The Georgia Landscape: Fall 2012

Background

The purpose of this survey conducted in fall 2012 was to gather information across multiple sectors to produce a descriptive landscape of early childhood professional development (PD) in Georgia. A total of 160 early childhood PD providers responded to the survey (see method section for additional details). These PD providers answered questions about the characteristics of the learners (the *who*), the content of the PD (the *what*), and the methods used to promote the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in practice (the *how*).

WHO were the learners who participated in professional development activities?

- The vast majority of learners in PD were reported to be practitioners (96%) or administrators (72%); other learners were reported to participate in PD by approximately one-third or fewer PD providers. (These included PD providers [e.g., coaches, consultants, TA providers, and so on; 34%], family members [26%], specialists [16%], and other [8%].)^a
- Of the practitioners, less than one-third had a 2-year, 4-year, or graduate degree (29%) and less than one-half had an early childhood and/or early intervention license, credential, or endorsement (40%). The vast majority of practitioners served pre-K children and infants and toddlers, whereas about one-fourth served children in kindergarten and higher. Most practitioners served children and families who were diverse with respect to a variety of factors (e.g., income, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, ability level), and the majority worked in center-based programs (e.g., child care, Head Start, public or private preschool/pre-K), as opposed to home-based or early intervention programs.

Information Specifically about Learners Identified as Practitioners

Practitioners' Level of Education

Graduate degree	3%
4-year degree	19%
2-year degree	7%
Some college	34%
High School	30%
Don't know	7%

Practitioners' Work Settings^a

Child care centers and homes	87%
Head Start or Early Head Start	71%
Public Pre-K programs	67%
Private preschools	59%
Public Pre-K for children with disabilities (Part B)	27%
Early intervention (Part C)	19%
K and/or primary grades	19%
Home visiting/family support	18%
Other	5%

Age Groups

Practitioners Served^a

Infants/toddlers	83%
Pre-K	93%
K-3rd grade or higher	26%

Groups of Children and Families

Practitioners Served^a

Diverse race, ethnicity, culture	94%
Low income	90%
English Language Learners	71%
Identified disabilities/delays	67%
At risk for learning difficulties or challenging behaviors	67%
Children with special health care needs	43%
Don't know	1%

WHAT was the content of the professional development?

- Approximately three-fourths or more of PD content focused on general classroom practices, knowledge about children’s development and learning, and working with families, whereas approximately one-half or less of the PD activities focused on practices to address diverse learning needs (e.g., strategies for working with children with identified disabilities, and children from diverse cultural and linguistic groups).
- About three-fourths of PD providers focused on their state’s early learning guidelines/standards and the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice guidelines; one-half or more focused on their state’s QRIS and professional competencies; less than one-half focused on NAEYC personnel standards and Head Start standards; and fewer than 20% focused on standards for serving children with disabilities (i.e., DEC recommended practices, OSEP child outcomes, DEC personnel standards) to guide their PD activities.

Content Areas Covered in PD^a

Strategies for improving general classroom practices, learning environments, and program quality to support development and learning for all children	88%
Knowledge about children’s development and learning	86%
Strategies for collaborating, communicating with, and/or supporting families	74%
Knowledge about children’s health, safety, and nutrition	71%
Assessment approaches	63%
Strategies for collaborating and communicating with other professionals	61%
Strategies for improving inclusion, participation, and learning for children at risk for learning disabilities or with challenging behaviors	53%
Strategies for improving inclusion, participation, and learning for children with identified disabilities	51%
Strategies for improving inclusion, participation, and learning for children from diverse cultural and linguistic groups	48%
Other	8%

Professional and Program Standards/Competencies on Which PD Was Based^a

Your state’s early learning guidelines/standards	85%
NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs	74%
Your state’s professional competencies or core body of knowledge for early childhood	70%
Your state’s Quality Rating System (QRS) or Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)	54%
NAEYC personnel standards	41%
Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and Head Start Program Performance Standards	35%
DEC Recommended Practices	18%
Office of Special Education Programs outcomes for children with disabilities	17%
DEC personnel standards	8%
Other	10%

HOW were professional development activities delivered?

- Almost all PD activities were organized as courses, workshops, or institutes. More than one-half incorporated some models of collaboration (TA, coaching); whereas less than one-half incorporated other models (consultation, mentoring). Other approaches (distance learning, co-teaching, communities of practice) were used by less than one-third of respondents.

- PD activities involved a variety of teaching strategies, with print materials, large and small group activities and/or discussions, lectures, role play, and video demonstrations mentioned by approximately three-fourths or more of respondents.
- Just over half of the PD delivered consisted of one-time events on a particular topic with or without some follow-up activities; whereas less than 20% of PD activities on a particular topic provided ongoing instruction or long-term PD support. The majority of PD providers offered follow-up support/technical assistance (TA) via email (85%), onsite/in person (73%), or by phone (71%); whereas very few offered follow-up support/TA via regular mail (15%).^a
- The majority of PD activities offered state approved/required training credits (74%); very few offered continuing education credits (9%), or college or university credits (7%).

Primary Approaches Used in PD^a

Courses, workshops, or institutes	95%
Technical assistance	61%
Coaching	53%
Consultation	42%
Mentoring	42%
Distance learning approaches	29%
Co-teaching	21%
Communities of practice/ practitioner study groups	18%
Other	1%

Level of Intensity of PD on a Particular Topic

1-time PD event with or without some follow-up activities	56%
Multiple PD sessions, but less than a full semester course	19%
Full semester course and/or long-term PD support	21%
Other	4%

Teaching Strategies Used in PD^a

Print materials	95%
Large and small group activities	95%
Large and small group discussions	93%
Lectures	87%
Role play	77%
Video demonstrations	72%
Case method of instruction	70%
Individual or group assignments	67%
Web resources, or online literature searches	56%
Guidance and feedback on instructional or intervention practices	53%
Field assignments, homework, back-home or action plans	49%
Networking opportunities	44%
Structured opportunities to interact with and learn from families of young children	21%
Other	2%

Key contexts and supports for professional development

A majority of respondents said: (a) they were aware of specific local, state, or federal policies and initiatives that influenced how they approached PD (68%); (b) they publicized their PD activities (71%); and (c) they evaluated their PD activities (97%). Just over one-half of the survey respondents said the PD they provided was coordinated across multiple agencies, institutions, or disciplines (53%); they were aware of organizational or agency resources that could be used to support the PD they provided (56%); and there were incentives available to encourage participation in the PD they provided (53%).

Method

The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion conducted the 35-item Web-based Landscape survey using Qualtrics software. A state team identified potential PD providers in Georgia and these providers were invited via email to complete the Landscape online survey (418 emails were successfully sent). Of the 183 individuals who followed the link in the invitation email to the Web site with details about the survey, 160 responded to the surveyb (87% of those who visited the Web site; 38% of the total number invited). See below for characteristics of survey respondents.

Characteristics of survey respondents

Sex

Female	98%
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Age

Mean	47
SD	11
Range	20–70

Ethnicity

Not Hispanic or Latino	99%
Hispanic or Latino	1%

Race

White	63%
Black/African American	35%
Other ^c	2%

Highest Level of Education

Graduate degree	72%
Bachelor's degree	28%
Some college	<1%

Discipline

Early Childhood Education/ Early Intervention	48%
Education/Special Education	27%
Psychology	6%
Social Work	3%
Allied Health	1%
Other	15%

Years in Early Childhood

Mean	21
SD	10
Range	2–44

Years Providing Early Childhood PD

Mean	10
SD	7
Range	1–33

Primary Employer

Self-employed independent contractor	22%
Child Care Resource & Referral	22%
University, college, or community college	18%
Federal agency	6%
State agency	5%
Local or regional agency	4%
Professional organization	2%
Other	20%

Provided PD as Part of a State or Regional PD Network or System

Yes	66%
No	34%

Primary Network/System

Georgia's Trainer Approval System	39%
Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CC&R&R)	30%
Georgia's Pre-K	7%
Early Intervention	6%
Technical College System	5%
Head Start/Early Head Start	4%
Infant Toddler Network	1%
Other	6%

Held a State Credential as a PD Provider

Yes	77%
No	23%

Frequency of PD Provision Annually

More than 5 times per month	37%
3–5 times or more per month	18%
1–2 times per month	21%
Less than once per month	25%

Additional information about the Landscape survey may be found at

<http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/planning-and-facilitation-tools/the-landscape>

This report was prepared in November 2012 by Heidi Hollingsworth at Elon University, and Virginia Buysse at the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. For additional information, contact npdci@unc.edu

^a For some questions, respondents could check all that apply so percentages will not add up to 100.

^b Some respondents did not complete all items.

^c Multiracial, and Some other race.