

# Early Care and Education Professionals' Needs for Health and Wellness Training: Results from a Statewide Needs Assessment

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## BACKGROUND

- Early childhood is a critical time in a child's development.
- High-quality early care and education (ECE) programs play an important role in promoting young children's health and well-being.
- Professional development and training are important tools for helping to prepare ECE professionals to deliver the kind of care that promotes young children's health and well-being.
- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension (UACE) conducts outreach to and provides programming for all communities in Arizona including professional development and training for ECE professionals.
- UACE Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences (FCHS) faculty and staff conducted a statewide needs assessment to understand the professional development needs of ECE professionals in Arizona on topics related to health, safety, and well-being.
- Findings will be used to plan the professional development and training that UACE faculty and staff offer to ECE professionals across the state.

## METHODS

### Instrument

- Online survey conducted summer 2023
- Survey questions asked about 25 training topics, 19 that prepare ECE professionals to care for young children and 6 that prepare ECE professionals to care for their own well-being.
- Assessed participants' interest in and perceived difficulty finding each training topic. Attempted to identify training topics that participants were interested in AND felt they would have difficulty finding to guide development of new training for ECE professionals.
- Survey questions also asked about training preferences.
- Cognitive interviews (n=4) were used to evaluate and improve survey questions

### Participants

- n=216 ECE professionals, at least one from every county in the state
- 48% worked at a Head Start Center, 34% in a private child care center, 18% in early Head Start, 10% were home-based providers
- 53% had been working as an ECE professional for more than 10 years

## RESULTS

### Training Preferences

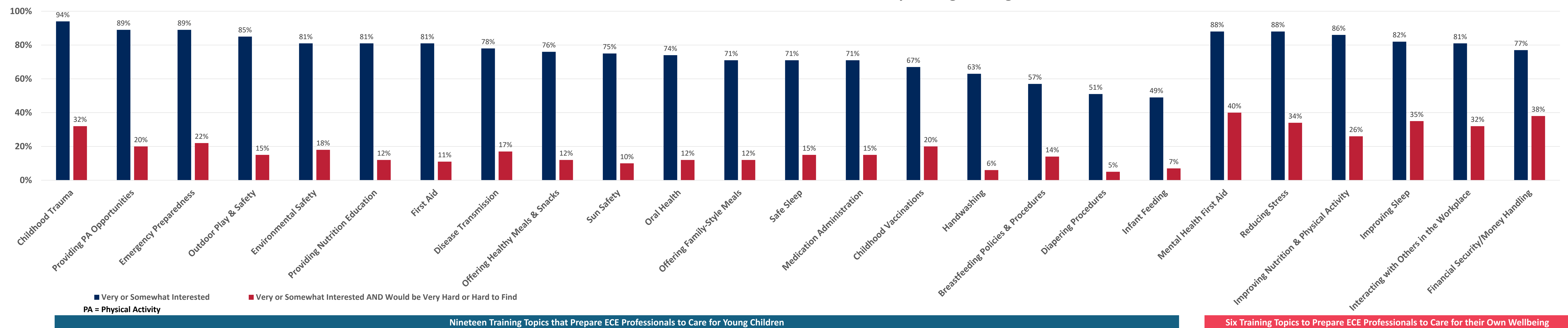
- **Preferred delivery modes:** In-person sessions (59%), pre-recorded content that can be watched at any time (58%), or live online sessions (57%). Hybrid (online and in-person) sessions were less preferred.
- **Preferred length:** one-hour sessions for online training, two-hour session for in-person training.

## DISCUSSION

- There were high levels of interest in all training topics, but fewer participants felt training would be difficult to find. Important to ask about both interest in and difficulty finding training.
- There were higher levels of interest in and more perceived difficulty finding trainings that prepared ECE professionals to care for their own well-being, rather than to care for young children's well-being.
- Results suggest UACE should focus efforts to develop training on employee (rather than child) health and well-being.
  - In particular, training can be developed on Mental Health First Aid, improving ECE professionals' sleep, financial security and money management, reducing stress, and childhood trauma.
- Training can be offered online, in-person, or as pre-recorded content.

## RESULTS

ECE Professionals' Interest In and Perceived Difficulty Finding Training



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**Frances McClelland  
 Institute for Children,  
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