Quality and Accessibility of Child Care

- The demand for quality child care continues to rise as children are spending more time in care outside the family. More than 60 percent of children from birth through age 6 receive some form of child care on a regular basis from individuals other than their parents.
- Evidence indicates that professional training and continuing education on the part of child care providers correlate with higher-quality care environments for children.

Extension’s Response

- The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service organizes and conducts training opportunities for current and prospective child care providers through regional conferences, county workshops, and online courses that meet professional development standards established by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Care Licensing.
- The purpose of the training is to enhance the knowledge and skills of providers and directors with regard to the care and education of children, as well as business management.
- Training participants learn about a variety of topics, including child development, guidance and discipline, early childhood literacy, nutrition, and health and safety issues.
- In 2011, AgriLife Extension and collaborators conducted 29 child care conferences in Texas for 2,865 providers. These providers care for more than 35,900 children at 798 child care businesses. Additionally, more than 67,000 online training sessions have been completed since January 2010 (39,873 were Texas-based).

Economic Impact

- By providing high quality education and training to the state’s child care industry, AgriLife Extension’s child care conferences directly support 798 child care businesses with estimated annual revenues of $233 million, and 2,865 jobs with an annual wage base of $54.5 million.
- Considering child care allows an additional parent to work outside the home; the child care conferences indirectly support an estimated 19,395 jobs with an annual wage base of $429 million.
- The full impact is expected to be higher when data from online trainings, self-study courses and county workshops become available.

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