



CHILD CARE MICROENTERPRISE TOOLKIT

RESOURCES FOR PROGRAMS

TIP SHEET 2:

MICROENTERPRISE TRAINING CURRICULA

Training and technical assistance can be vital to help increase the success rate of child care providers who are starting or improving their own businesses. One form of technical assistance program practitioners or Child Care and Development Fund Administrators can provide to child care business owners is microenterprise training.

Microenterprise training provides guidance on starting and managing a sustainable business. Most curricula include components such as assessing the market in a local area, writing a business plan, advertising, pricing of services, budgeting, and other financial matters.

Why Provide Microenterprise Training and Assistance?

The Microenterprise Fund for Innovation, Effectiveness, Learning and Dissemination (FIELD), a program of the Aspen Institute, has done extensive research for years on the types of training and technical assistance provided by microenterprise programs to their clients. FIELD has found the following outcomes:

- ★ Business ownership and/or exposure to business ownership clearly is associated with completing training and having a business after training. Ownership and/or ownership exposure also is related to having relevant work experience and extensive personal support systems. Strong programs offer a range of services to help clients assess their capacity and acquire the resources and experience needed.
- ★ Completing training, and other markers of participation and achievement, such as completing a business plan, completing class assignments and having high attendance, are all associated with having a business, and/or experiencing business growth after training.
- ★ Financial skills also matter. In one program studied by Aspen, the clients who achieved economic self-sufficiency during an 18-month period were much more likely to report using key financial skills, such as cash-flow projections and management and break-even analysis and pricing, than other clients.
- ★ Effective programs also offer ongoing technical assistance over the critical start-up and growth stages of business development, ensuring clients are provided repeated opportunities to hear and learn new information and skills. The median increase in business revenues was 30 percent for clients in two model programs that participated in long-term, comprehensive assistance of this type.

Source: The Aspen Institute. (n.d.). *Fast facts about training and technical assistance*. Retrieved February 14, 2006, from www.fieldus.org/Stories/FastFacts.html#training



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Microenterprise Training Curricula and Technical Assistance

Providing technical assistance and choosing, obtaining, and designing microenterprise core training programs consume a large amount of time and resources for program administrators.¹ As a result, the FIELD program has developed numerous resources to help microenterprise programs improve their services and compare their efforts to best practice standards.

The following two publications by the Aspen Institute can help organizations consider what curriculum is appropriate for their needs and how to best deliver business consulting, coaching, and mentoring services to their clients.

- * ***Keeping it Personalized: Consulting, Coaching, and Mentoring for Microentrepreneurs*** (2002) documents best practices in three areas of technical assistance: business counseling, coaching, and mentoring services. The guide dedicates a section for these three areas, each of which includes lessons and findings and case studies from experienced programs. The module also includes an assessment tool to help practitioners identify how well their current practices reflect industry-wide best practices. This resource is available at <http://fieldus.org/publications/PRIMEVol4.pdf>.
- * ***Training for Microenterprise Development: A Guide to Curricula*** (2002) identifies the characteristics of an effective business-planning curriculum for low-income clients and what issues are important for microenterprise programs to consider when seeking a new curriculum. It also presents detailed information about 13 different curricula that are available for purchase. This resource is available at <http://fieldus.org/publications/PRIMEVol3.1.pdf>.

Child Care Business Curricula

The following are business curricula that have been developed specifically to provide microenterprise training to aspiring or existing child care business owners. Both curricula include participant and facilitator manuals. While participant manuals can be used individually, both curricula are intended to be facilitated by a trainer for best results.

- * ***Building Child Care Basics Curriculum***, by Self-Help, is a new curriculum for child care providers that covers topics ranging from marketing and professionalism to budgeting and cash flow. The CD-ROM includes the trainer and participant manual, a Spanish version, and other useful materials. The curriculum is designed to be used in a classroom setting, ideally as a full course, but chapters can also be pulled out individually and used for one-time workshops. While certain exercises may be useful for providers to do on their own, the curriculum itself is not designed for a child care provider to use individually. It is also important to note that while much of the content is focused on business skills and is applicable in any State, the content is focused more on North Carolina resources and regulations. Practitioners from another State should look through the curriculum and find their State regulations and resources before teaching. In the future, Self-Help will also be posting some of the exercises and information on its Web site at www.self-help.org. For more information on this curriculum, e-mail childcarebusinessbasics@self-help.org.

¹ See other tip sheets in the *Resources for Programs* series—*Tip Sheet 1: Microenterprise Development, Micro-Loans, and Individual Development Accounts*, which provides more information about funding, and *Resources for Programs Tip Sheet 3: Effective Practices*, which provides effective training and technical assistance practices. Both are available at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/index.html#microenterprise>.



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- * ***Developing Your Family Child Care Business***,TM created by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in conjunction with the First Step Fund, combines industry-specific information with business information in an eight module, 39-hour course. This curriculum is designed to be utilized by programs that want to provide entrepreneurship training to child care providers across the country. Through the training course, providers create a parent handbook as well as a business plan. The modular nature of the course allows programs flexibility in how they deliver the course, and allows them to deliver the product to existing child care operators and those anticipating start-up. The First Step Fund also can provide training support to organizations that will be delivering the program. The curriculum will be available in Spanish in the near future. For more information, visit www.fasttrac.org/pages/program_childcare.cfm. To find programs that already offer this training, visit www.fasttrac.org/search_event.cfm. For questions related to the curriculum and ordering information, contact Dorothy Browning, National Curricula Manager, First Step Fund, at DBrowning@FirstStepFund.org or call 816-235-6598. The facilitator guide costs \$15 and each participant guide costs \$40.

General Microenterprise Curricula

Another technical assistance option is to provide general microenterprise training to clients. Child care providers can benefit easily from the general business lessons as well. However, if organizations choose to offer general training courses, they can consider providing additional support or mentoring with a focus on child care industry-specific information. This alternative might fit organizations' needs better if they have clients from a variety of industries, thereby offering training that is applicable to other businesses besides child care.

The following are business curricula that have been developed to provide general microenterprise training to aspiring or existing business owners:

- * ***CORE FOUR® Business Planning Course***, by the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, is a training that provides essential business planning knowledge for anyone with an existing business, a business idea, or the desire to become an entrepreneur. The four core elements of business planning outlined in the manual include learning how to identify and target the local market, understanding how to operate a business under the proper standards and legal requirements, learning how to project business' cash flow, and planning for business success. This tool can be used individually or with a facilitator. For more information on this curriculum, call 218-749-4191, e-mail Susan L. Martin at susanm@entrepreneurfund.org, or visit www.corefouronline.com. The instructor manual costs \$199, and each participant guide costs \$44. Wholesale prices for large orders also can be arranged.
- * ***First Step FastTrac***TM is a curriculum designed for entrepreneurs with low- to moderate-incomes who are starting or expanding a small business. The curriculum enables people to explore strengths and opportunities for personal and professional development, as well as develop a feasibility plan to evaluate business concepts. The curriculum is available in English and Spanish. For more information on this curriculum, call 877-450-9800, e-mail info@fasttrac.org, or visit www.fasttrac.org/pages/program_firststep.cfm. For information about becoming a FastTracTM administrator or facilitator in order to gain the background knowledge and authorization to teach this curriculum, visit www.fasttrac.org/pages/provider_overview.cfm.

The Child Care Bureau does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.