

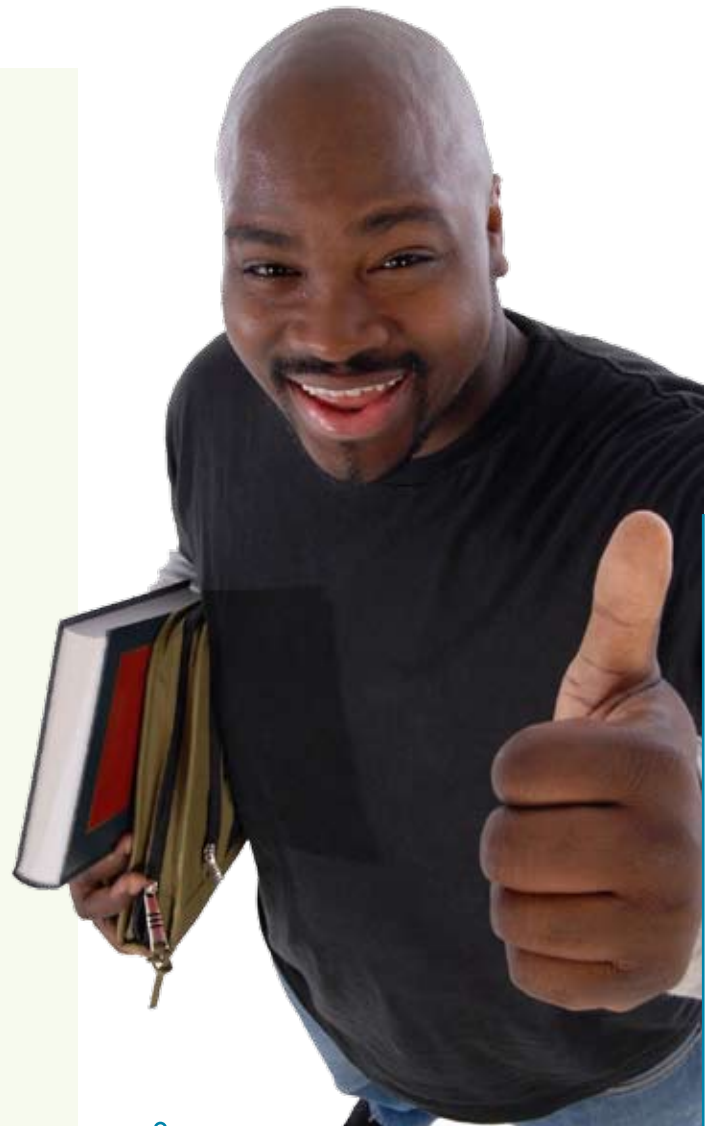


2008 Children's Forum Customer Service Survey
A collection of responses from the early care and education community.

“I would like to thank you for all the hard work and support that you have given me to be able to get my degree. I work with children ages 2 to 12 and we all know that that is the most crucial time in human life as far as learning. I feel that I can make a difference in their lives by being educated on how to teach and care for these young children. I have one of the most important jobs in the world even though a lot of people don’t recognize that. I would like to see a program for a bachelor’s degree available for child care providers and staff. It sounds that it will be a requirement before long for all of us as child care practitioners and lets face it, with our wages we can’t afford college. Thanks again.”

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Executive Summary

In an effort to evaluate its current services, implement new programs, update its strategic plan, and strengthen its customer service, the Children's Forum developed a comprehensive survey to gather feedback from the field. Targeting the early care and education community, the online survey was distributed in May of 2008. Collection of responses continued through June 12, 2008.

This report presents the results of the survey collected from child care, VPK, after school providers, state agencies, early learning coalitions, advocacy organizations, nonprofit service providers, membership organizations, private businesses and other types of related entities.

Understanding how the Children's Forum can better serve the needs of the early care and education community will help us continue our mission to provide leadership, education, services and advocacy to achieve accessible, affordable, quality child care and early learning services for all children.

The survey included closed and open-ended questions and was sent to two groups of individuals. Group A was comprised primarily of a mix of professionals directly and indirectly affiliated with the early care and education industry, and Group B was made up primarily of child care providers and T.E.A.C.H. recipients. Because the two groups reported differing types of responses, their results are reported separately. See **Findings** for a detailed demographic analysis of these groups.

Approximately 480 individuals responded to the survey, although some respondents did not complete every question or skipped questions. Overall, the results of the survey were favorable with both groups giving high marks (Group A 97.6 % and Group B 93.5%) to the quality of Forum services as being excellent or good. Other areas of strength included the professionalism of Forum staff, where 98.8 % of Group A and 93 % of Group B chose excellent or good. In addition, 95.2 % of Group A and 81.1% of Group B believe that the Forum participates in activities that support our mission. See **Findings** for detailed information.



Throughout the survey, individuals had opportunities to voice their opinion on Forum services and ways in which they can be improved. Sixty comments were received from Group A, with 73% expressing satisfaction with Forum services. In Group B, there were 176 comments, with 63 % expressing satisfaction. See **Findings** for more details and **Appendices** for a full listing of comments.

Overall, areas needing improvement cited by respondents included quality of content and ease of navigation regarding the Forum website, which may be affecting their rate of use of the website. Only 13% of Group A and 14.5% of Group B reported regular use of the website. On the other hand, 60% of Group A and 53% of Group B found the web information to be helpful. Survey findings also indicated the Forum should step up its efforts to inform providers that we operate the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs and that their voices are needed to educate their local legislators and policy makers about the importance of these programs to the field. See **Findings** for detailed information.

The results of this survey are intended for the Forum to better understand public perceptions of its services from members of the child care industry. Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses can help in determining areas in which change may be needed.

Introduction

Why Conduct a Customer Service Survey?

It is important for any organization to assess the perception and satisfaction of its customers. In conducting this survey of members, child care providers, partners and stakeholders, the Children’s Forum sought to better identify and understand our audience. Using the results, we now have the ability to evaluate our current services, improve customer service, and, if applicable, design new programs.

“The Forum provides something that we all want, a chance to better ourselves.”

Population

The survey was conducted using an online format with child care, VPK, after school providers, state agencies, early learning coalitions, advocacy organizations, nonprofit service providers, membership organizations, private businesses and other types of child care entities.

The survey was sent out to two different groups of individuals. Group A was comprised primarily of a mix of professionals directly and indirectly affiliated with the child care industry, and Group B was made up primarily of child care providers and T.E.A.C.H. recipients. A combined total of 480 individuals responded to the survey, with 90 in Group A and 390 in Group B.

Method

The survey was e-mailed to the addresses of the individuals in Groups A and B. The survey consisted of 11 questions in both closed and open ended-formats. Five of the questions provided opportunities for further comments. The questions included demographic information on respondents, quality of Forum services and customer service, importance of current Forum activities, programs for the Forum to consider in the future and feedback on the Forum website.

The survey was distributed through Survey Monkey, an external company specializing in survey development and tracking. All responses were collected through Survey Monkey and recorded in a secure database.

Response Rate

It is generally acknowledged that survey response rates are dependent on many factors, including type of survey and nature of the population of interest. Because this was the first survey of its type conducted by the Forum, there was no preconceived expectation of the response rate that might be achieved. The primary goal of the survey was to collect a body of information that would be representative of the population to the extent possible using an existing e-mail distribution list.

In Group A, 90 out of 295 survey recipients (31%) returned a completed survey. Of the 90 respondents, 76 answered all questions and 14 answered some questions. In Group B, 390 out of 1888 survey recipients (21%) returned a completed survey. Of the 390 respondents, 340 answered all questions and 50 answered some questions.

Group Surveyed	Number of Respondents	Number of Surveys Sent	Response Rate
Group A	90	295	30.5%
Group B	390	1,888	20.7%
Grand Total	480	2,183	22.0%

Limitations of the Survey Data

Sampling Bias

Several types of error or bias can influence the results of any survey, and the Children’s Forum identified several limitations in its survey implementation. The greatest limitation was the method through which the survey was distributed. The survey was sent to Forum members, partners, friends and stakeholders who at some point in time had provided the Forum with an e-mail address. In the interest of efficiency and reasonable effort, the Forum used this existing database of e-mail addresses, recognizing that the subgroup of individuals involved may not be representative of the larger population of all Forum customers.

Response Rate

Inaccuracy of some e-mail addresses was also an issue in the survey implementation. Approximately 494 of 2,183 e-mail addresses (23%) were invalid and/or came back as undeliverable and therefore may have lowered the response rate.

Response rate may have also been affected by the nature of the online survey collection procedures. Survey Monkey allows only one person per e-mail address to take the survey. A unique survey link was included in each e-mail and the link could only be used one time. Once the link was clicked or activated, it was disabled so that no one else using the account or viewing the e-mail could take the survey. Many individuals in the child care field, especially in Group B, share the same e-mail address. This limiting factor will be considered in future survey designs.

An additional limitation to the data occurred because some did not provide responses to all questions. See **Findings** for a complete list of questions, the number of people who responded to them and the number who declined to provide an answer.

“The trainings I have attended have been very helpful and informative. Teachers can never stop learning through the workshops and children's lives are enriched.”



Findings

Despite a modest response rate, the survey results yield a rich source of information about the Children’s Forum and its services from providers, partners, friends, members and stakeholders. For ease of understanding, results will be separated for each question for Group A and Group B.

Findings are presented for the type of organization in which the respondents work, their relationship to the Forum and their general opinions of Forum services and resources. In some tables, the figures add up to more than 100 percent as some individuals chose more than one response to some questions.

“The (Forum) services are very important for all child care providers to be a better teacher and ultimately a better person. Thank you.”

Where Do They Work?

Respondents to the Forum survey identified themselves in eight categories of business organization.

In Group A, 89 individuals (99%) provided their organization type. More than 20% reported their organization type as a state agency, which was the largest percentage in this category. Only 4.5% of respondents reported their organization type as advocacy organization, making this group the smallest percentage.

In Group B, 384 individuals (99%) provided their organization type. Nearly 88% reported their organization type as a child care, VPK or afterschool provider, which was the largest percentage in this category. Less than 1% of respondents reported their organization type as advocacy organization, making this group the smallest percentage.

Group A

Organization Type	Percent of Responses	No. of Responses
1. Child care/VPK/After school provider	15.7%	14
2. State agency	20.2%	18
3. Early Learning Coalition	15.7%	14
4. Advocacy organization	4.5%	4
5. Nonprofit service provider	14.6%	13
6. Membership organization	9.0%	8
7. Private business	11.2%	10
8. Other	19.1%	17

Group B

Organization Type	Percent of Responses	No. of Responses
1. Child care/VPK/After school provider	87.8%	337
2. State agency	1.3%	5
3. Early Learning Coalition	4.2%	16
4. Advocacy organization	0.5%	2
5. Nonprofit service provider	14.8%	57
6. Membership organization	2.3%	9
7. Private business	8.3%	32
8. Other	4.4%	17

*Note: Some individuals chose more than one answer for their organization type.

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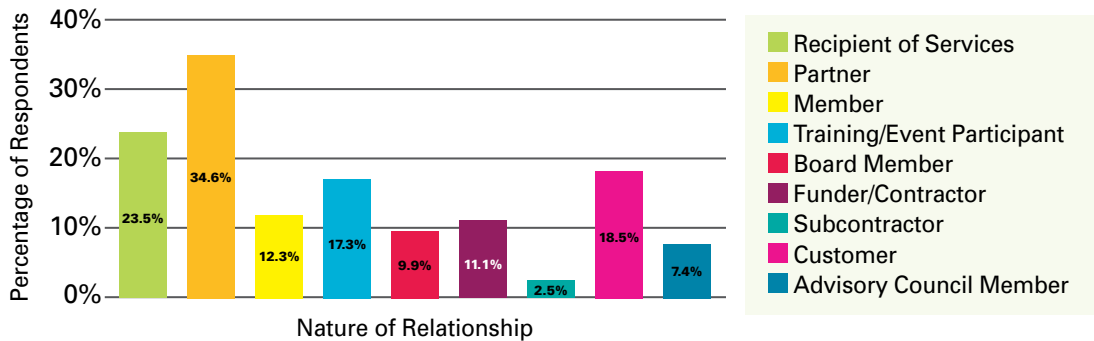
What is Their Relationship to the Forum?

Respondents to the Forum survey identified themselves in nine categories of their relationship to the Forum.

In Group A, 81 individuals (90%) provided their relationship to the Forum. More than 34% reported their relationship as a partner organization, which was the largest percentage in this category. Only 2.5% of respondents reported their relationship with the Forum as a subcontractor, making this group the smallest percentage.

“Our coalition, for the past several years, has worked closely with the Forum. Their outstanding and talented employees developed significant outreach efforts for our community programs. We have been blessed to work with such a committed organization that serves all of our children.”

Group A

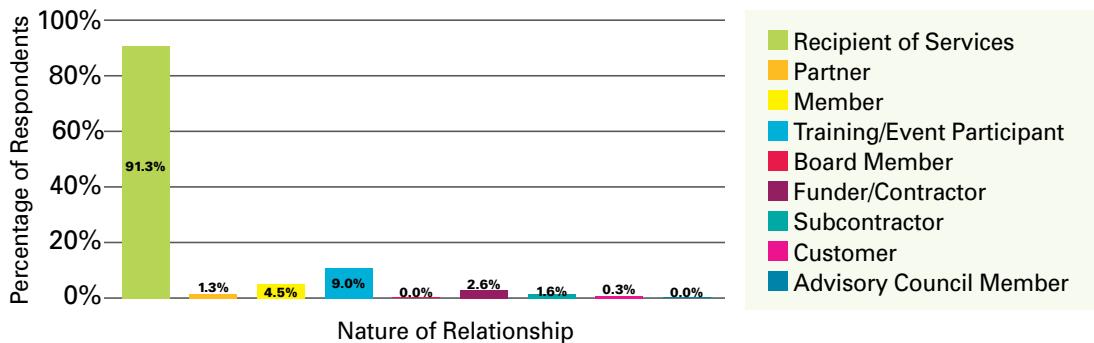


**Note: Some individuals chose more than one answer for their relationship to the Forum.*

In Group B, 378 individuals (97%) provided their relationship to the Forum. More than 91% reported their relationship with the Forum as a recipient of services, which was the largest percentage in this category. No respondents reported their relationship with the Forum as an advisory council member or board member.

“I am a scholarship recipient and I am very grateful for the blessing of having the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Thank you so much for all you do to allow individuals to reach their goals.”

Group B



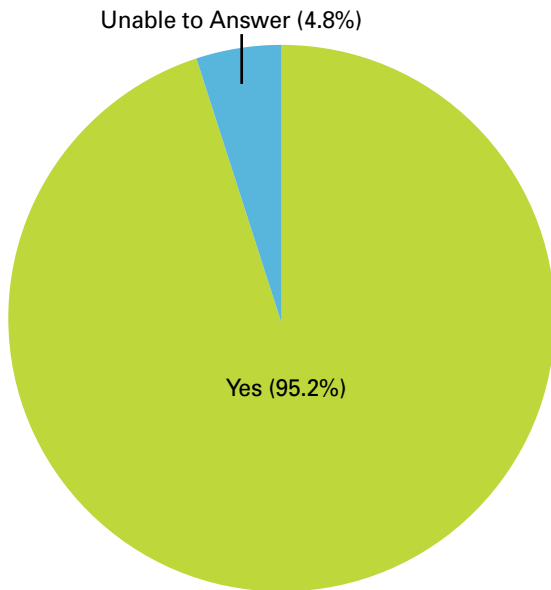
**Note: Some individuals chose more than one answer for their relationship to the Forum.*

Do They Believe that the Forum is Engaged in Activities that Support Its Mission?

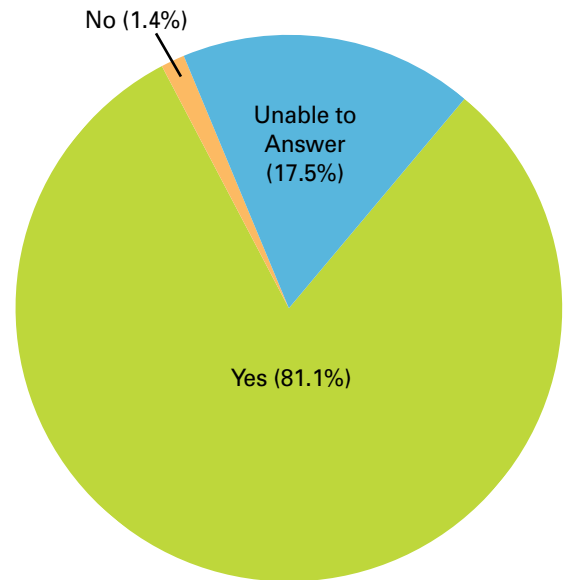
In Group A, 84 individuals (93%) responded to the question. More than 95% reported that the Forum was engaged in activities that support its mission and 4.8% were unable to answer the question. No one selected “no” as their answer.

In Group B, 330 individuals (85%) responded to the question. More than 81% reported that the Forum was engaged in activities that support its mission and 17.5% were unable to answer the question. Only 1.4% selected “no” as their answer.

Group A



Group B



How Did They Rate the Overall Quality of Services from the Children’s Forum

In Group A, 82 individuals (91%) responded to this question. Approximately 72% rated the quality of Forum services as excellent and 25.6% rated services as good, for a total favorable rating of 97.6% of respondents.

In Group B, 357 individuals (92%) responded to this question. More than 59% rated the quality of Forum services as excellent and 33.6% rated services as good, for a total favorable rating of 93.5% of respondents.

Group A

Quality of Forum Services	Percent of Responses	No. of Responses
Excellent	72.0%	59
Good	25.6%	21
Average	2.4%	2
Below Average	0.0%	0
Inadequate	0.0%	0

Group B

Quality of Forum Services	Percent of Responses	No. of Responses
Excellent	59.9%	214
Good	33.6%	120
Average	4.5%	16
Below Average	1.4%	5
Inadequate	0.6%	2

How Did They Rate the Professionalism of Forum Staff?

In Group A, 85 individuals (94%) responded to this question. More than 84% rated the professionalism of Forum staff as excellent and 14.1% rated their professionalism as good, for a total favorable rating of 98.8%

Group A

Professionalism of Forum Staff	Percent of Responses
Excellent	84.7%
Good	14.1%
Average	1.2%
Below Average	0.0%
Inadequate	0.0%

In Group B, 357 individuals (92%) responded to this question. More than 65% rated the professionalism of Forum staff as excellent and 27.5 % rated their professionalism as good, for a total favorable rating of 93%.

Group B

Professionalism of Forum Staff	Percent of Responses
Excellent	65.5%
Good	27.5%
Average	5.3%
Below Average	1.4%
Inadequate	0.3%

“Through the mail or on the phone, the staff is always helpful and professional. The trainers are so well informed and their workshops help in my day-to-day activities so much. Thank you for all your time and efforts.”



How Did They Rate Forum Initiatives as to Importance for Continuance in the Upcoming Year?

In this question, individuals were asked which Forum programs they believed were most important to continue in the upcoming year.

In Group A, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship program (77.9%) and the Child Care WAGE\$ Florida program (66.7%) were rated as extremely important by more than two-thirds of the respondents. All other initiatives were rated as extremely, very or somewhat important

by more than 93% or more of all respondents. Expanding consultation services was rated favorably by the lowest number of respondents, at 88.4%, which nonetheless represents well over three-fourths of all respondents.

Group A

Importance of Forum Initiatives for Continuation or Expansion	Expand T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Program	Expand Child Care WAGE\$ Florida Program	Conduct Research	Increase training/PD* opportunities	Expand training/PD* registry for child care personnel	Create a web-based trainer's registry	Provide advocacy for children, child care and the early childhood workforce	Expand consultation services
Total No. of Responses	77	75	75	76	75	76	76	77
Extremely Important	77.9%	66.7%	34.7%	46.1%	32%	23.7%	55.3%	31.2%
Very Important	18.2%	24.0%	45.3%	32.9%	44.0%	34.0%	30.3%	32.5%
Somewhat Important	2.6%	5.3%	14.7%	19.7%	17.3%	36.9%	13.2%	24.7%
Less Important	1.3%	0.4%	5.3%	0.0%	6.7%	3.9%	1.3%	11.7%
Not Important at All	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%

*PD = professional development

“I would prioritize any of the above focuses based on profitability and how they fit with your overall mission. You can not be all things to all people. The Forum has done an excellent job of expanding its products and services!”



In Group B, all initiatives were rated as extremely important by at least 56% of the respondents. The initiatives rated most often as extremely important were to expand the T.E.A.C.H. program (89.5%) and the WAGE\$ program (84.9%). All other initiatives were

rated as extremely, very or somewhat important by more than 95% or more of all respondents. Expanding consultation services was rated favorably by the lowest number of respondents, at 95.4%, which again represents the great majority of all respondents.

Group B

Importance of Forum Initiatives for Continuation or Expansion	Expand T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Program	Expand Child Care WAGE\$ Florida Program	Conduct Research	Increase training/PD* opportunities	Expand training/PD* registry for child care personnel	Create a web-based trainer's registry	Provide advocacy for children, child care and the early childhood workforce	Expand consultation services
Total No. of Responses	344	344	339	334	341	338	339	340
Extremely Important	89.5%	84.9%	57.2%	70.1%	66.6%	56.5%	61.7%	51.2%
Very Important	10.2%	12.8%	31.0%	24.7%	23.8%	27.5%	29.8%	31.5%
Somewhat Important	0.0%	1.7%	8.3%	4.1%	7.3%	13.0%	7.1%	12.7%
Less Important	0.0%	0.3%	2.1%	0.9%	1.2%	1.8%	1.2%	3.5%
Not Important at All	0.3%	0.3%	1.5%	0.3%	1.2%	1.2%	0.3%	1.2%

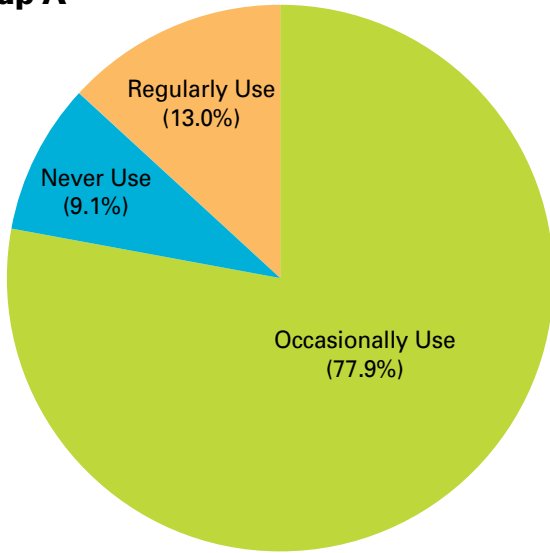
*PD = professional development

“Few organizations have been able to professionally present early education topics to legislators, media, parents and the early childhood community as has the Forum.”

How Often Do They Use the Forum Website?

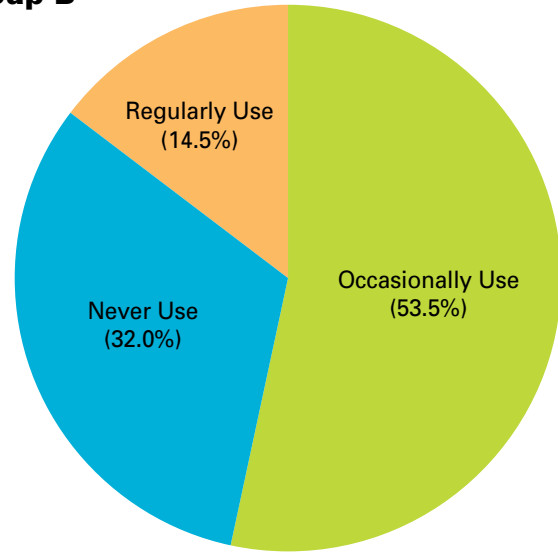
In Group A, 77 individuals (86%) responded to this question. Nearly 78% responded that they occasionally visit the Forum site and 9.1% have never visited the site. Only 13% reported that they regularly use the site.

Group A



In Group B, 338 individuals (87%) responded to this question. More than 53% responded that they occasionally visit the Forum site and 32% have never visited the site. Only 14.5% reported that they regularly use the site.

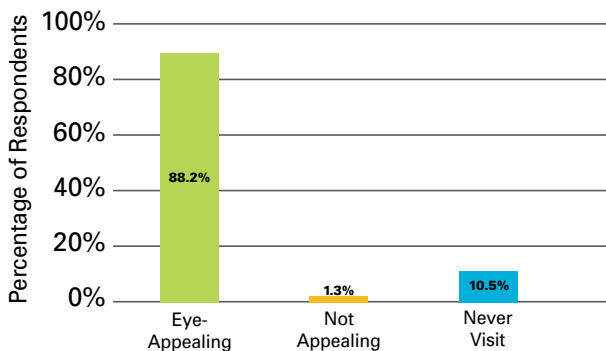
Group B



What Do They Think of the Design and Layout of the Forum Website?

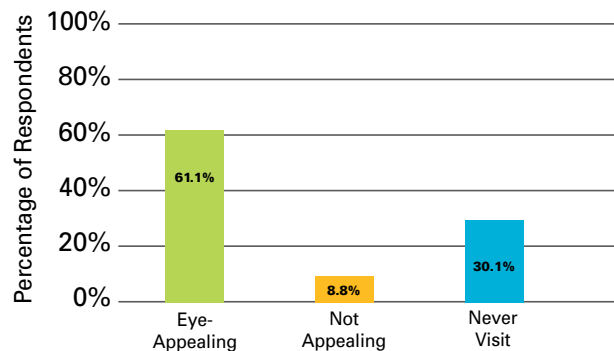
In Group A, 76 individuals (84%) responded to this question. More than 88% thought the website was visually appealing and 10.5% have never visited the site. Only 1.3% reported that the site was not appealing.

Group A



In Group B, 329 individuals (84%) responded to this question. More than 61% thought the website was visually appealing and 30.1% have never visited the site. Only 8.8% reported that the site was not appealing.

Group B



Do They Find the Forum Website Useful?

In Group A, 73 individuals (81%) responded to this question. More than 60% thought the Forum website was very helpful and 35.6 % found it somewhat helpful. Only 4.1% reported that the site was not very helpful at all.

Group A

Usefulness of Forum Website	Percent of Responses	Total No. of Responses
I find it very helpful.	60.3%	44
I find it somewhat helpful.	35.6%	26
I don't find it very helpful at all.	4.1%	3

In Group B, 261 individuals (67%) responded to this question. More than 52% thought the Forum website was very helpful and 38.7 % found it somewhat helpful. Less than 9% reported that the site was not very helpful at all.

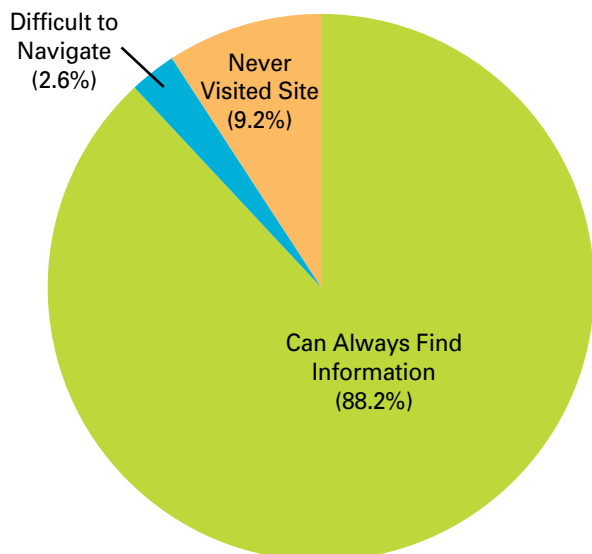
Group B

Usefulness of Forum Website	Percent of Responses	Total No. of Responses
I find it very helpful.	52.5%	137
I find it somewhat helpful.	38.7%	101
I don't find it very helpful at all.	8.8%	23

Is the Forum Website Easy to Navigate?

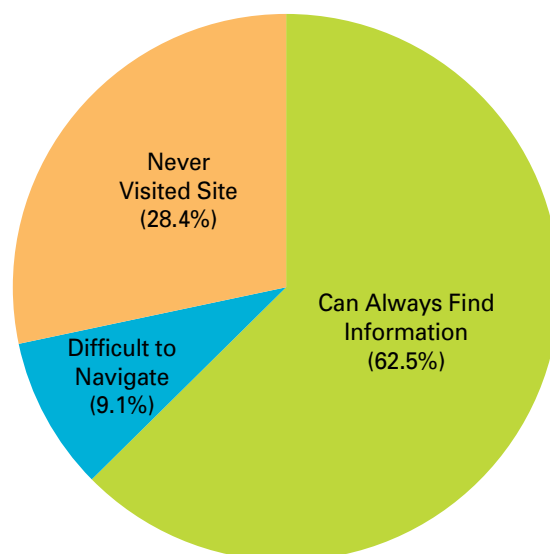
In Group A, 76 individuals (84%) responded to this question. More than 88% thought the Forum website was useful but 2.6% found it difficult to navigate. More than 9% have never visited the Forum website.

Group A



In Group B, 317 individuals (81%) responded to this question. More than 62% thought the Forum website was useful but 9.1% found it difficult to navigate. More than 28% have never visited the Forum website.

Group B



What Kinds of Comments Did They Have?

Throughout the survey, there were opportunities for individuals to voice their opinion on Forum services. There were 60 relevant comments in Group A, with the majority of comments (72.9%) being highly favorable regarding the work (especially customer service) of the Forum. There were also some comments (27.1%) that provided information on ways the Forum can improve its services and outreach to the early care and education community.

In Group B, there were 176 relevant comments. Approximately 63% of comments were favorable responses from the respondents, especially with

regard to the T.E.A.C.H. program and customer service at the Forum. Nevertheless, 36.3% of responses provided helpful information regarding improvements to customer service and to the logistics of the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs. Nearly half (46.1%) of these suggestions to improve these programs, however, were suggestions over which the Forum has little control such as providing Bachelor's degrees for T.E.A.C.H. recipients and paying for textbooks up front instead of through a reimbursement process.

Implications of Findings and Next Steps

Overall, the findings between Group A and B do not differ to any great extent. From coalition directors and agency partners to recipients of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, all respondents had similar perceptions and opinions regarding Forum services and programs.

- Although both groups tended to give high approval ratings to Forum programs and services, a higher percent of respondents in Group A gave favorable ratings in more areas.
- Respondents in both groups A and B reported the Forum is doing an excellent or good job regarding the overall quality of Forum services. This finding is especially important since services are the Forum's backbone. The operation of high-quality services and satisfaction among customers allows the Forum to enjoy a reputation of professionalism and integrity throughout the state.
- Both groups reported that the Forum provides exceptional customer service and a high level of professionalism among Forum staff. However, there were a few comments from Group B regarding how T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ services could be improved, such as processing checks in a timely manner and responding more rapidly to messages left by T.E.A.C.H. recipients. An effort, already ongoing, will be made among T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ counselors to improve response time to recipients and quickly resolve clients' problems and concerns.
- Although the majority of respondents reported the layout and design of the website was visually appealing and offers useful information, they do not regularly visit the site. In response, the Forum plans to revamp the site during the next several months.
- Both groups reported that the most important initiatives for the Forum to continue into the upcoming year are the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs. Both groups rated the expansion of these programs as extremely important. Although other program initiatives were also rated as extremely important, very important or somewhat important, none approached the same percentage level of responses as T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$. Expanding these programs and improving their services will be an area of focus for the Forum in 2008-2009. In addition, we will continue to advocate for T.E.A.C.H. in the legislature, and we will promote further investment of local communities in the WAGE\$ program since it is not currently available in all Florida counties.
- The Forum needs to educate individuals participating in T.E.A.C.H. that, although we operate and manage the T.E.A.C.H. program, we have limited control over program practices such as direct payment of book stipends and offering of Bachelor's degrees. In addition, we will continue to encourage T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ recipients to contact their local legislators and policy makers about the importance of these programs to the field.

Appendix: List of Respondents' Comments by Category

Comments Regarding Mission of the Forum

Group A

- I think the Forum needs to work harder to include all providers of early education and I am specifically of the public school programs.
- Noble mission but sometimes "activities" define us more than we like!
- I do think the mission has changed somewhat from years ago and is broader and maybe less focused on availability and more on quality and services and now research.
- The Forum does a wonderful job.
- Indeed, the Forum is actively engaged in providing training and technical assistance, conducting advocacy efforts, and raising public awareness on the impacts of quality in early education. The data analysis for statistics in Florida and the management of the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program remain keys to supports and improvements for the early education and care systems in the state of Florida.
- Our collaboration with the Children's Forum has significantly strengthened our college's credentialing program.

Group B

- We were not aware of availability of services regarding disabilities and health care needs.
- I could not have continued teaching without the help you give in the way of scholarship money.
- The trainings and scholarships are a great way to help us do a better job for the kids.
- T.E.A.C.H. is an EXCELLENT program, however it has been a hardship to purchase the text books and wait for a refund for 4-6 weeks. I wish they would go back to the way they used to do it so we didn't have any out-of-pocket expenses.
- You people are the greatest!
- There is a huge inadequacy of services/support for the education of young children with special needs.
- I'm really not very aware of your services other than T.E.A.C.H.
- It provided me with a quality college education to continue my early childhood degree.
- Yes! Not only through the funds that help me continue my education but the supportive parents.
- Excellent program!
- The scholarships have helped my staff.
- Excellent services
- This was a wonderful opportunity to receive a CDA or for me personally an AS degree in early childhood.
- I do not know if you provide any help to children. Preschool teachers are able to take classes in early education using the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, which in turn will help the children that they teach.
- Providers appear to be the "bad" guy when receiving funding. Parents have very little responsibility. The board outwardly expressed to providers they do not want to talk about budgets. Quality care has been placed on the

providers at the providers expense. Funding is not being provided for quality care, however more paperwork has been burdened on the providers. Dollars for performance will increase quality care! Administration dollars should be given to the providers which are now responsible for duties paid for previously through funding dollars. When questions arise from providers regarding parent responsibilities and board responsibilities to provide the "provider" with information that will effect the provider budget - no answer's can be given. An example of this is the allowance of absentee days for VPK students. A parent can easily obtain a new certificate and give it to a new provider with them having no knowledge of how many absentee days for the month or year the student has used. The provider finds out almost two months later that no payment will be received because the parent used all the sick days with the previous provider. When this is brought up with the board - the answer is "well it's a glitch" - and the provider is left holding the bag with little care at all from the board. The mission is a bit skewed. It appears that the Forum is only concerned with getting care for children and accomplishing its goal with very little respect as to how it is accomplished. What happened to initiative dollars given to teachers which stayed in his/her position for a year? What happened to technical assistance for the correction of facility issues? Why are administrative dollars not given to the provider or even considered? Why are the providers being rated on kindergarten scores when the students leave for nine weeks prior to school since VPK started? Prior to VPK parents paid for quality education and stayed through the summer. Students were ready for kindergarten. Why aren't the providers asked where they believe improvement dollars should be spent? How about a simple question like: How do you believe quality care of children could be improved? I believe the CB is afraid of the answer they would receive even though the answer that everyone knows is: improved working conditions for child care professionals which includes a higher wage or subsidy based on longevity and performance. How about a performance standard for teachers to improve quality? Is the mission of the board to eliminate child care providers by putting them out of business because staff is not available? Does anyone care about the turnover rate or the education level of the staff entering the CDA programs? Many cannot even read! Is this the mission of the board or is quality care by educated well paid professionals not an option? There is no platform for the providers to speak.

- I love to work with kids. I have been working with children for five years.
- The trainings I have attended have been very helpful and informative. Teachers can never stop learning. Through the workshops, children's lives are enriched.
- Personally, I wouldn't be able to earn an AS degree otherwise.
- It would be nice if teachers in my area could take advantage of the Child Care WAGE\$ Program, and I wish that the scholarship would pay for more than two classes per semester.
- I feel competent in my work.

Comments Regarding Quality of Forum Services

Group A

- We have been very pleased with our website—the staff is highly professional and very responsive!
- As a public school VPK provider, we have little opportunity to interact with or receive services from the Forum.
- Keep striving for excellence!
- I have never been disappointed.
- Excellent research.
- Few organizations have been able to professionally present early education topics to legislators, media, parents and the early childhood community as has the Forum.
- Have no current information.
- Staff is always responsive, patient, and helpful.
- I have had excellent service from the Children's Forum in the area of technical assistance.

Group B

- The T.E.A.C.H. staff in Tallahassee has been very supportive and informative.
- Both as a recipient and as a director with teachers who are recipients, your service is excellent.
- Every time I have needed answers or services, all representatives assigned are wonderful facilitators. Thanks.
- I do not understand why the scholarship won't pay for classes, books etc., even if a Pell Grant is available. The two things have nothing in common. I am awarded a scholarship to attend college and then earn a grant to help with living expenses. Why doesn't T.E.A.C.H. acknowledge that?
- They deliver what they promise in every way; customer or client service is great! Samantha Z. "ROCKS!"
- Every time I call the staff is wonderful and they are so helpful.
- Personally known is the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program— all other programs hearsay.
- I've had to confirm staff wages more than once for the same person.
- Need fewer students assigned to one T.E.A.C.H. advisor, my advisor told me she has over 500 students. When there is a mix up in paper work for example, I would have to explain myself all over again when I gave them the information the day before. They have too much going on to remember my case.
- Money takes a long time to arrive; way past the due date. Money amount is not always the correct amount promised.
- We enrolled for the WAGE\$ program over a year ago and still have not received any confirmation.
- It gives some people an opportunity to get an education that they maybe could not have afforded to get without your help.
- Could be better, with better funding.
- Above Excellent!
- Excellent
- Getting back to recipients takes too long.
- My counselors have been great, they are always available and they help me a lot.
- Can't rate— not sure what services are available for providers. Too confusing with all the arms extended and receiving funding!
- The advertising reaches so many who might otherwise realize the support network available to them.
- It is excellent. Maybe you can help us to go forward on our education after the Bachelor's degree.
- I very much appreciate the opportunity to go to school on the scholarship through T.E.A.C.H.
- I have not yet received my scholarship funds.



Comments Regarding Professionalism of Forum Staff

Group A

- Courteous, knowledgeable, willing to listen and share.
- Quality staff from top to bottom
- Quality and proven leadership resides in the top tier of the organization.
- Always has been in the past.
- Excellent work with Joy, receptionists are always courteous.
- Like any organization some unevenness.
- Mr. Christian Winterbottom has provided outstanding assistance and guidance.
- Everyone has been very pleasant and helpful when I have called or visited their office.
- Oops! Made a professionalism comment in the above question, but it's worth repeating: Samantha is very informative and very easy to work with.
- My counselor has always helped me in a timely manner and is very professional and supportive.
- I haven't had to interact with anyone.
- Always nice, always helpful.
- My counselor is very bad at returning phone calls. Otherwise, things are perfect.
- Absolutely wonderful and knowledgeable staff!!!!
- Lisa Adams is a gift from God and I would be lost without her!

Group B

- It has been excellent except for the last five months. Someone new took over PBCC and the waiting time for call backs, reimbursement, or information is not as quick as it use to be.
- Phone calls are not returned and left with unanswered questions.
- I received a check then received a letter stating Children's Forum made a mistake and then another letter stating to ignore first letter and no one in Tallahassee knew what I was talking about when I called them to ask what the problem was.
- Bernasha Anderson is very helpful and professional.
- Emily Fulkerson is a great asset.
- Your personnel provide accurate information and are always available and ready to assist.
- I have had good experiences.
- My counselor is very bad about returning phone calls.
- They respect my opinion and accept ideas.
- Erin, Banasha, and Heather. Thank you.
- Lisa Adams is always available to answer any questions I might have.
- Samantha has always been very helpful when I have needed her help with getting my scholarship to pay for things.
- Excellent!
- I had interaction with Kiki Carter, Jessica Long and Maria Veliz. They had been very helpful, diligent and outstanding professionals. Thank you.
- I really enjoyed working with Ms. Emily, she was very helpful and she always got back with me about concerns or any questions that I had.
- Always prompt and helpful when getting back with me.
- Sally is excellent! Awesome listener. However, I believe her hands are tied with the extent of help she can offer. She is a great encourager!
- I have always been able to get my inquiries answered and in a timely and knowledgeable manner.
- Through the mail or on the phone the staff is always helpful and professional. The trainers are so well informed and their workshops help in my day-to-day activities so much. Thank you for all your time and efforts.
- Bernasha Anderson is a great person to deal with.
- The counselor is always available to answer any questions I may have.
- My current counselor, Emily, is great! The one before her (I forgot the name) was terrible. She had an attitude and was unavailable a lot.
- Prompt response, kind and professional.

Comments Regarding Forum Initiatives

Group A

- I would prioritize any of the above focuses based on profitability and how they fit with your overall mission. You can not be all things to all people. The Forum has done an excellent job of expanding its products and services!!
- In reality, all of these are so important.
- Educate the general public about the essential importance of the early years. Most adults don't fully realize that. We're very used to speaking to the choir.
- Please fund Bachelor's degrees through T.E.A.C.H. and expand WAGE\$!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- This is most critical—needs to be done more frequently—low level of ECE awareness of ELC Boards.

Group B

- Most of these items are already being done? Make WAGE\$ available to religious-exempt schools that are servicing school readiness and VPK again.
- I would like to see more done for family childcare providers. So much is designed with center-based childcare and there is not enough designed for us.
- Increase \$\$\$ for teachers to work on classes and increase hours.
- All areas have a great concern and a need for attention.
- Provide systems for childcare professional training, tracking and child immunization tracking. This would relieve a tremendous amount of paperwork and tracking that providers are expected to keep with no compensation.

Comments Regarding General Feedback

Group A

- Our coalition, for the past several years, has worked closely with the Forum. Their outstanding and talented employees developed significant outreach efforts for our community programs. We have been blessed to work with such a committed organization that serves all of our children.
- The Forum is on the right track and moving in the right direction, great work folks!!!
- The Children's Forum's PEOPLE are what makes it all work! Thanks.
- We are entering tough economic times at both a state and federal level. Please make sure that the projects, services and grants that you get involved in make sense financially for both the short and long term. Attempt to find opportunities that fit with the strengths of your organization.
- The Forum performs an important role in getting better services and education to children. The more active we are in actual work, the advocacy will naturally follow. Let our work be our words.
- It would be great to expand the area on your website that gives information about local coalitions and their efforts.
- All staff are very provider friendly and their work is extremely professional and top notch!!
- The Forum does a great job in providing educational opportunities for students to enhance their learning and teaching abilities.
- The one area needing improvement is the Child Care Training Information Center. It is difficult to get through to someone and callbacks are not timely. Also, answers to questions are at times not consistent. I refer people very often and have them call me back because they either 1) don't understand (or perhaps don't like!) the answer they were given or 2) Never made the connection with anyone on that end. I would love to see a place on your website that has FAQs for professional development since the DCF website is so difficult to navigate.
- Brand the Forum as the KEY state organization on child care issues!
- Over the years, I have tried to make significant connections to the Forum. It would be helpful to include early educators in the public school as members of the early education community.
- I have always found the Children's Forum staff to be highly knowledgeable, competent and professional. All ventures involving the Children's Forum are delivered in a high-quality manner.
- In recent years (3-4) our interaction has diminished with the Forum based principally on our role with the coalition as a service provider. Our leadership role, compared to the past, has significantly changed since the coalitions were created. They make it clear to us that they have assumed the voice of the child care industry.
- Thanks for doing this survey.
- Unfortunately, the needs are immense; it is therefore necessary for the organization to stretch its capacity to the greatest degree possible.
- The Children's Forum provides excellent services to those in the state of Florida in the areas of professional development, T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$, as well as DCF evaluations.
- Provide more sessions for coalition stakeholders at the summer conference or at other times during the year. Thank you.
- Hope to continue working together to improve the communication of information to child care providers. Consistent messages.
- Legislative members and staff praised the quality of the T.E.A.C.H. Annual Report.
- The older parts of the population need to be educated about the essence of early childhood education. As we begin to do a new program here in Apalachicola at St. Patrick's Church, we are going to make a special effort in educating the parish community in this regard. Thank you for all you do.
- Bev Esposito is WONDERFUL! Her feedback and interaction with our Coalition during the PERKS Project has been essential! Thank you!
- We are pleased to be a member of the Forum and believe that their work on behalf of the children of Florida truly make a difference.
- SERVICE PROVISION: There are some topics which the Forum addresses, which I would prefer to have addressed by a state agency. The Early Learning Information System for AWI would surplant the need for the Forum to expand databases on training of providers, or the need for maintenance of a database for the early education system. However, if Florida is not going to fund ELIS, the database is a responsibility which takes on more importance in support of early educators, trainers, administrators, and others. Since AWI provides for a Quality Initiative Contract, I would encourage The Forum to apply to be a service provider in this area. The WAGE\$ is a program which is very noteworthy. It is the lack of local dollars to fund the stipends for participants, which keeps my ELC from being a participant.
- I am proud of the Forum, and think you should change your name to the Phoenix Center (rising up from the ashes).
- You are an important entity in Florida. Thank you for all you do for teachers, children, and families.
- I really think the advocacy and information sharing portion of what you do is very important. I really don't have a lot of suggestions on money earners for you though.
- The leadership provided by the Children's Forum on behalf of early childhood issues/initiatives continues to be desperately needed and unfortunately, rarely available in the non-governmental sector. Our organization, Project KID, relied heavily on the Forum's leadership (both that of the formal organization, as well

as the management) during an intense start-up phase in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The Children's Forum served as a one-stop resource for the broad-ranging support needs of Project KID during that time. The Children's Forum's unhesitating willingness to offer whatever help was needed (from creating logos, to providing invaluable practical advice that came from actual hands-on experience, to preparing presentation drafts) was critical. Most importantly, the Children's Forum modeled for us the proper approach: a single-minded focus that children are served without regard to who got credit. With the indispensable help of The Children's Forum, Project KID was able to serve over 5,600 children in Mississippi in the immediate days after Hurricane Katrina, for which our organization was awarded the 2005 Manhattan Institute Award for Social Entrepreneurship. Today, we are working with cities to prepare for children's needs, particularly those of first responders, in disasters.

- I am always pleased to see products created by the Children's Forum. Being in the field, I always worry about duplication of efforts, and wonder how the Forum navigates the murky waters of early childhood. I personally would like to see more involvement by the staff in local initiatives and less emphasis on large scale projects. I know they are important to the Forum as a whole, but small steps create giant leaps!
- Our institution appreciates the professionalism of the Children's Forum staff. We look forward to additional collaboration in the future.
- If at all possible, child care providers are always in need of inservice training. The Children's Forum has always been a great resource for the providers. Maybe working in conjunction with DCF can increase the amount and the types of training available.
- Continue to be the voice for quality care and education for children in Florida.
- I went to your website and found some good information. You have FAQ's for CCTIC but not the answers. You would save money on answering calls if more info was available.
- I appreciate getting the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship to further my education. I would not have been able to attend college without it. I have been going to college for the past six years on the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship and am expecting to graduate in May of 2009.
- Samantha is a great counselor. Thanks so much for all the work you do:)
- The content is what I expected , I can directly apply the content to my classroom and find value in the resource materials.
- Please make scholarships available to more teachers. That is the best thing you can do!
- I am a scholarship recipient and I am very grateful for the blessing of having the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship. Thank you so much for all you do to allow individuals to reach their goals. God Bless.
- I am a family childcare provider and would like to see more services offered to us in general. There are so many resources designed for just centers, and we need programs designs just for us.
- I am thankful that you all are doing a great thing.
- I'm blessed to have been introduced to the T.E.A.C.H. program. I'm 50 years old and decided to go back to school to complete my Associate's degree. T.E.A.C.H. made that dream come true, and they did not made it hard to qualify or access. Thank You T.E.A.C.H.!
- Excellent services and great resource for teachers working with young children.
- The services are very important for all child care providers to be a better teacher and ultimately a better person. Thank you.
- Wages are low for all the education we need.

Group B

- It would be helpful to know the availability of T.E.A.C.H. funds. Often teachers don't apply because they want to increase their education quickly and don't know when their scholarship will come through.
- Samantha has always been a great help to regarding anything I might need.
- Sarasota County needs to look into getting into the WAGE\$ program. I don't think it is fair to providers when a county chooses not to be involved when it is available.
- Thanks for my T.E.A.C.H. contract; without it I would not be in school.
- I think this program is very useful and it encourages teachers to further their education and experience with these children.
- The Forum has been very beneficial at my center whereas four of my teachers are on the PERKS Program working on their associates degrees in ECE.
- Need more fax machines in the office, they're always busy.
- The T.E.A.C.H Scholarship that I received helped me to obtain my CDA. I am very thankful for the Children's Forum. I know that they do great work for our children. I certainly hope that this program will continue to grow. Our young children need quality teachers and this scholarship helps so many people gain their certificates.
- Investigate a way to show the public we are professionals and not glorified babysitters.
- May God bless you all for the good jobs!!!!
- I was able to get my AAS using a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship. I just applied for a BS scholarship to go to USF. I hope that you will be able to get funding for the BS scholarships as without it, I probably will not be able to go back to school. And, as we all have heard, the Head Start Standards are going to require a BS degree, I am praying that the funding will become available. Thanks for all the hard work that you are doing to help early childhood teachers.
- I just want to thank you for the programs and services you offer and the funding you have given for providers like myself to continue our education.

- Please continue your help in our professional development so in return we can better the service we give our children and families.
- I love the Children's Forum. Without the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship, I would not have been able to fulfill my dream of an education, I just wish that the aid continued for more schooling.
- Please include assistant directors and directors in the child care WAGE\$ money. Some of us make a lot less than \$17 per hour.
- I have received funds from the Children's Forum on a couple of occasions and found it to be very beneficial. These funds and my counselor were very instrumental in helping me go further in my field of early childhood education. It has truly been a blessing. Although I have benefited greatly, I would prefer that T.E.A.C.H. start to pay for books again instead of making us pay for them then submit for reimbursement. Unfortunately, I struggled one semester to pay for books first and my last semester and this semester I am trying to take my classes without books because I can't afford to pay for them in advance.
- I believe that childcare providers should be paid much better than we are. We provide so much more care in what we do than most people realize. A lot of people take us for granted just thinking we are a "glorified babysitting service" when indeed we are not. I want to be looked at differently and make sure that we, as a community in this program, work together to allow the opportunity to let the parents know that we don't just change diapers, wipe snotty noses, or clean up their messes. We actually spend a lot of valuable time with the children allowing them to explore themselves. Parents also do not know the extent of knowledge needed to be able to work efficiently in child care. It takes a very special person to get up and go to work daily in order to ensure safety, effective learning experiences, and just have fun.
- I would like to see the Children's Forum become more active in VPK policies as it relates to issues regarding not only absences but tardies as they also affect the learning of children. I would also like to see changes made with regard to when a private faith based school can begin their school year. Currently, we cannot begin before Orange County schools which now puts our ECP out of sync with the rest of our K-8 school year calendar. I would also like to see the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship expanded to include a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education.
- I could not have completed the educational requirement without aid from the Children's Forum T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship.
- In my opinion, I think something needs to be done with the textbook situation. It has been a hardship to purchase the books and wait for over a month to get reimbursed. The T.E.A.C.H. program is WONDERFUL. I just hope they can figure out a better way to handle the textbook situation. Thanks.
- This has given me the opportunity to further my educational goals. With out helping me in the cost of my books, it would be a financial hardship on me. I am looking forward to working with you and promoting quality early childhood education. Thank you Samantha, you are the greatest.
- I believe the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship should pay for books up front because some of the students are not able to afford them because we do not make that much money and we do not get wages like other people do.
- Thank you so much for helping to provide me with the opportunity to improve my education.
- Training early childhood educators is so vital for children. We always need to be updated. Wages are also an important part for an early childhood provider.
- Thank you so much for all the funds that have helped us pursue our education as early childhood teachers. We could not have done it with out your help.
- Need to provide more money for gas since gas prices have gone up.
- I think it is amazing that you can financially help child care centers train and educate their staff.
- The Forum has helped our staff in getting their education that they otherwise weren't able to afford.
- The Children's Forum provides a very valuable service to the children of Florida and their teachers. Thank You! The goal in FL is for K-4 teachers to eventually have a BS degree in early education. Many of our teachers, as you can imagine are financially stressed at the idea of going back to school to earn their BS degree. At this time, I understand that T.E.A.C.H. does not finance this degree. Would you consider underwriting this in the future for our teachers. It would certainly be in harmony with the current VPK movement in our state. Our school is not yet VPK, but we plan to be very soon. Thank you for your consideration of this idea. Elaine Miller, Director: Merritt Island Christian Preschool
- I think that the WAGE\$ stipend should include more staff, such as aides and directors.
- Thanks for the help for our teachers getting their CDAs. Some would not be able to get it without financial help.
- If you could, limit the time between when paper work is sent in and when responses are given.
- I have a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship and it has helped me so much. The only issue I have that would help me is I wish the Forum would go back to paying for our books instead of us paying for them and sending in a receipt. Sometimes we don't have the money to purchase the book and it can be very difficult.
- I would like to thank you for all the hard work and support that you have given me to be able to get my degree. I work with children ages 2 to 12 and we all know that that is the most crucial time in human life as far as learning. I feel that I can make a difference in their lives by being educated on how to teach and care for these young children. I have one of the most important jobs in the world even though a lot of people don't recognize that. I would like to see a program for a Bachelor's degree that is available for child care providers and staff. It sounds that it will be a requirement before long for all of us as child care practitioners and lets face it, with our wages we can't

afford college. Thanks again.

- The need to support the early childhood programs within our state is crucial. State support for quality childcares must include financial incentives and programs,
- I would like to thank T.E.A.C.H. very much for giving me the chance to further my education in childhood education.
- I dropped my scholarship because my employer did not do her part of the contract. Maybe if T.E.A.C.H. takes care of collecting from the employer and paying the employee things such as the three hours a week stated in the contract and also the completion of the contract bonus. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship is a great help for students like me, but if I do my part of the contract and my employer does not, I would just be tied to my employer with no benefits. I say with no benefits because I could pay what my employer pays for my scholarship. I am very frustrated about the whole situation.
- Great program. I hate to say anything negative about it because if we did not have T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships, my teachers would not have been able to receive their AA's, renew CDAs or receive their CDAs. The only things that would make it easier on a provider is to increase the time off wage as \$5 just does not cover it and the hours should be five a week.
- The T.E.A.C.H. program has really helped my teachers learn more about early childcare. The financial assistance is needed for many people who want to make early childhood education their profession. The cost of mandatory training required in a Florida licensed facility has become so expensive, that private providers must help pay for those requirements to have a high quality preschool program.
- I want ideas about more activities outside of the classroom.
- We are really looking forward to the WAGE\$ program. It serves as such an incentive.
- Getting back to students waiting for T.E.A.C.H. money.
- I would love to see the program sponsor the continuing education of teachers. It would be great if they sponsored a Bachelor's degree now as it is required most everywhere. Keep up the good work!
- With laws changing and with teachers soon needing four year degrees, there needs to be more classes available in the Venice Area because we have so many teachers wanting to further their education, but not enough funds or classes readily available for working mothers going back to school.
- Please reinstate 100% of the funding for teachers who enrolled in the WAGE\$ program. It was a great blow to their pride and pocketbooks when expected funds were so shallowly filled.
- How to receive your T.E.A.C.H. rebates for book purchases could be explained in better detail.
- I think that Children's Forum should take into consideration that it is hard to purchase book for registered classes in advance due to us working close to minimum wages and working paycheck to paycheck. It does not allow us to have all materials available at

the time of class. I have been with T.E.A.C.H. for several years and all I had to do was just go to the book store and tell them my name and that I am with T.E.A.C.H. All I had to do was just sign the papers and then at the end it was deducted from my traveling expense. It is now really inconvenient.

- I am happy that you care!
- As a faith-based, licensed, accredited provider in North Broward County, I am blessed to be a part of the Forum. My staff and I have attended workshops on scholarships in the afterschool area. I have two staff members now receiving the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship and two that received the funding previously. Presently, three of my staff are recipients of the WAGE\$ program - all are a blessing to me and my staff. I sincerely appreciate all the Forum does for early childhood providers. Thank you so much.
- More help for teachers!
- The Children's Forum is very important for us- the childcare givers; It gives is the opportunity to be better for the education of children, THANKYOU!!!
- The T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship allows me to continue my education and remain in the classroom where I love to be. The WAGE\$ program adds a little to the paycheck and every little bit helps. Thank you.
- I never visit the web page but now that I know, I plan to use it.
- This scholarship has enabled me to reach goals that have been unattainable and I am so thankful to be participating in this program. Thank you for hiring the best staff.
- Thank you for providing such a wonderful program for early childhood education providers!
- Great services and staff.
- Keep it up! This program gave me what I needed to complete my degree.
- From personal experience, I cannot emphasize how valuable the opportunity for teachers to receive a scholarship is to help them receive a CDA, or even go on for an AS degree. This greatly reduces staff turnover and allows staff to continue working in the field they have a passion for. We are grateful!
- We have had the opportunity to offer training through scholarship to about eight teachers. Five of the teachers are still working at our preschool today. We greatly appreciate the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship opportunity.
- It is very helpful for me to do the CDA online through your service rather than going to the college. Thanks for giving us quality programs online.
- I am not very familiar with the Forum or what you do. I find most information that I need through local organizations or local coalitions more helpful.
- The plans and services are wonderful, but there is always room for improvement.
- The T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship has helped me a lot, I just wish that it continued on so that people could get their Bachelor's degree in the program.
- Together, we can make a difference???? When other than this survey have the providers been asked this question? It's hard for me to believe that our voice is

heard. Our mission is to provide quality care to children that we serve. The children are more than just a number to us! We need staff to stay – and be recognized for ALL they already do - and be compensated, not asked to do more paperwork! Have a great day.

- I think the Children's Forum needs to pay special attention to training of teachers in early care. I benefitted a lot from the training I received because of a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship, and was able to pass on information to my colleagues which improved the quality of the care we provide. I was also able to encourage teachers to apply for scholarships for further education. Now more than half of the teachers at my school are enrolled in classes seeking their AS/AA degrees.
- I am very excited to have a scholarship with you all. Thank you once again.
- I would like to thank T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ for all the help they have given me.
- I do appreciate all you do.
- I think it is excellent service
- They have helped me out.
- It would be nice if when you have a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship that you could change jobs and not lose your scholarship. I don't like being locked into a job.
- It was very helpful to me and my career. Thank you very much.
- As a VPK teacher and recipient of T.E.A.C.H., providing centers with additional funds for salaries is needed.

However, I realize this comes from us the tax payers at the expense of other worthy issues. Also, I believe VPK teachers only need a CDA or some relevant courses for the AS degree in early childhood management.

- God bless them for giving me a chance to further my childcare education.
- If those are the upcoming plans, it is going to be very interesting. If there's a way I can help to achieve them, please let me know. I'd be happy to.
- Put information in Spanish . . . please, good day.
- This program is doing a great job in motivating daycare workers to advance in higher education. This program not only benefits the workers, but it benefits the students who are affected when teachers do not have proper subject matter of what is being taught in the classroom. Also, strategies to assist in an effective learning environment.
- I THANK everyone for giving me the opportunity to continue my education through the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. So far I have ACED all my classes that were paid for through the T.E.A.C.H. program. THANKS AGAIN.
- Thank you for all of your help! I feel very competent!
- T.E.A.C.H. helped me with my CDA and I'm a better professional now. Thanks for your help.
- Great program. Motivates me and helps me financially.
- The Forum provides something that we all want, a chance to better ourselves.

