



Helen R. Walton Children's
Enrichment Center

Early Childhood Initiatives Center

Statistics

Nationwide, turnover in early childhood education entry level positions is 400% annually due to high stress, an absence of appropriate job training, and few support resources.

- Studies show that attendance for at least one year in a high quality early childhood program results in a decrease in school remediation, a three-fold increase in high school graduation rates, less use of social services, and higher lifetime earnings.
- According to Entergy economists, there is a return of \$9.21 for every dollar invested in high

Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center opened the Early Childhood Initiatives Center (ECIC) in 2009 as a place where all early childhood professionals can share knowledge, resources, and best practices to benefit the growth and education of young children. The goal is to improve quality of care and education in NW Arkansas for working families with children ages 0-5. **The ECIC reaches beyond the 250 children we serve at our center to elevate the quality of care and education provided by the 507 Northwest Arkansas childcare programs to over 40,000 children in our region.** We employ a 7-prong approach of professional and program development, accountability, resource and financial support, awareness, and advocacy to create systemic change towards state quality accreditation.

ECIC programs train early childhood professionals on minimum state licensing requirements, early childhood education, nutrition, business development, quality accreditation, and also offer mini-grants, an educator library, resource center and technical assistance. Our programs aim to reduce licensing violations, reduce teacher turnover rate by providing support and education, and move centers beyond minimum standards to quality accreditation by the state. **In 2013, these free outreach programs improved the quality of care being provided at over 242 child care centers responsible for nearly 22,834 children under age five. Most significantly, our work helped double the number of centers that have obtained quality accreditation.**



Reliable, quality care is essential in ensuring that NW Arkansas can recruit and retain the workforce necessary for growth. **Studies show that attendance for at least one year in a high quality early childhood program results in a decrease in school remediation, a three-fold increase in high school graduation rates, less use of social services, and higher lifetime earnings.** Tomorrow's workforce is being shaped by today's early childhood programs.



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#HWCEC

Leadership Training

Directors with specialized training in program administration are more likely to support the professional development of their staff, secure and maintain program funding, and achieve center accreditation.

The need for well-qualified early childhood administrators in Northwest Arkansas continues to rise. Programs with strong leadership are essential in creating fiscally sound early childhood programs with learning environments that meet the new minimum licensing requirements.

ECIC offers a training series designed for early childhood leaders, equipping them with tools to work toward Quality Accreditation along with business development, change management, human resources, and others. The series is designed to create a collaborative approach to learning, encouraging dynamic discussions and fresh ideas among a trusted network of colleagues. The leadership training series specializes in classes that allow directors

to attract and retain a more highly qualified staff while fostering an engaging learning community between the center, teachers, children and families.

Classes and Workshops include:

- Business Development and Arkansas Quality Rating and Improvement System Preparatory Program: Business trainings focused on the child care industry focus on directors, owners, and administrators throughout Northwest Arkansas.
- Taking Charge of Change training series: Covers a variety of topics toward improved quality of business practices and leadership early childhood programs in our region.
- American Management Association's training series: Provided to early childhood professionals with an emphasis on human resources management in early child care centers.
- Aim4Excellence National Director Credential training: Directors work to improve business practices in our field.



Early Childhood Trainings

85% of a person's intellect, personality and social skills are developed by age 5, making high quality early childhood experiences critical for children's success.

Early childhood education programs to have a powerful impact on child development, workforce recruitment and quality of life in our community. The ECIC invests in the early childhood teacher, center director and the early childhood program. Every year, over 2500 early childhood professionals attend trainings on a variety of Early Childhood Education topics at the ECIC. Sessions are led by expert training staff, and are developed based on current topics in the early childhood field. Classes encourage reflection and discussion of new ideas, and participants are given ready to use resources and strategies to implement in the classroom.

Examples of Classes include:

- FUN-damentals of Phys Education: Training focuses on fun outdoor activities to stimulate gross motor development

for preschool aged children.

- Flip It!: Behavior guidance... "Don't flip out! Flip It! The FLIP IT series taught four supportive steps to help young children learn about their feelings, gain self-control and reduce challenging behavior.



- Hi, Bye, What Else is There? - Teachers learn methods to break the cycle of bland communications and host meaningful conversations with parents that will benefit the child and family.

- Infant Basics 1 and 2 Trainings: focuses on the physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development of infants.

- Teacher Trained or Potty Trained?: offers a healthy perspective for developing consistent practices for potty training as well as guidelines for building productive partnerships with families.
- Biting 201: Learn strategies to reduce biting incidents and gain valuable insight on how to communicate with and educate parents.

Health & Safety Trainings

The ECIC's Health and Safety Training Program ensures that Northwest Arkansas' young children receive quality care and education in safe and healthy environments. All trainings are open to all early child care facilities in Northwest Arkansas. The majority of training costs are offset by grants, making classes available for free or at a minimal cost.

Examples of classes include:

- Healthy Practices - Healthy Children: Learn how to train your staff basic health practices that meet quality standards. .
- Healthy Children - Healthy Lives: develop an understanding of the comprehensive nature of wellness, the importance of enhancing children's wellness.
- SIDS: This training covers important information about SIDS, traumatic brain injury and shaken baby syndrome.

Across the United States, nearly 25% of children will experience choking in a child care setting; 40% of children will experience a fall resulting in injury; almost 70% of children will experience a bite, abrasion, or cut requiring First Aid assistance.

- First Aid/CPR: receive an American Red Cross certification so that staff can provide a safe environment, meet compliance standards.
- Managing Allergies and Using EpiPen: Learn to use the device in an emergency by practicing with EPI-PEN demos and ensure your program has checks and balances for children with allergies and medical alerts.
- Live Fire Drill: Experience firsthand how to put out a fire, how to maintain your fire extinguisher and more.
- Cooking Matters: Learn how to shop for and prepare healthy, low-cost meals.
- Recognizing Cooties!: Learn about childhood diseases and how to tell if a child is contagious.
- Risk Management 101: Gain an understanding of different types of emergencies that can arise and need for risk management plans and training.

Pre-Service

Turnover for new teachers is heavily attributed to high stress levels associated with being ill prepared to enter a classroom. Professionals new to the field lack the proper foundational knowledge to help them create a safe, appropriate environment for the children that they serve.

Our Pre-Service Training Program ensures that new early childhood professionals receive detailed training on safety, minimum state licensing requirements and behavioral guidance before they enter a classroom. The training series results in fewer licensing violations due to a more knowledgeable workforce and ultimately this means increased safety for young children in Northwest Arkansas. Using the DHS website, we follow our participating centers to track licensing violations in an effort to quantify the impact of our training.

Our recent evaluations demonstrate considerable improvements across participating centers. From the January to July 2013, the number of licensing violations across participating centers decreased by 35%. There measurements further improved with a 54% decrease in licensing violations from July to December 2013 across participating centers. It is evident that the Pre-Service Training Program is instilling the knowledge necessary for early childhood professionals to deliver high quality services to the children they serve.

Resource Center

The ECIC Resource Center is open to all early childcare and education facilities that participate in ECIC services. The center provides access to a full-time degreed early childhood professional, assistance with curriculum design, lesson planning, along with support and resources needed to implement the lesson plans.

Additional support includes: equipment assistance, research, early childhood resources, professional support, technical assistance

Free resources: library, laminator, die cut machine and die cuts, book binder, copier, computers and wifi

Free materials: butcher paper, construction paper, lamination, poster board, felt, file folders



Value of Early Childhood Services in Northwest Arkansas

Workforce Development

- Recruitment: Families from metropolitan areas are accustomed to state or nationally accredited child care/early childhood options
- Women in the Workforce: 71% of mothers with children under 5 are in the workforce
- Today's Workforce: Child care programs ensure an estimated 47,925 families are able to work each day (31,950 children in Benton and Washington Counties are enrolled in child care – Department of Human Services)

Community Development

- Soft Infrastructure: No different than transportation, child care is critical to ensure community members can get to work
- Quality of life: 2012 NW AR Quality of Life Survey stated that only 52% of respondents felt the quality of early childhood programs were good or very good. Even more troubling, only 21% felt these services were affordable.

How the ECIC impacts Northwest Arkansas

Immediate Impact

- 50% reduction in licensing violations in 2012 over year prior
- 46% increase in state quality accredited programs
 - 2009 = 19% of all licensed programs were accredited
 - 2013 = 38% of all licensed programs are accredited

Continuing Impact

- \$9.21 ROI for every \$1 invested in AR early childhood (Entergy Report)
- Children who attend a high quality early childhood program are:
 - Better prepared for school
 - Need less school remediation
 - 3 x more likely to graduate high school
 - Need less social services
 - Have higher wage earnings



What
happens
here
changes
the
world

