

## Program Supports Childcare Providers with Infrastructure Support



*Thirty-two childcare providers met weekly through 11 sessions during the Childcare Intensive program to strengthen their business foundations.*

**NORTH DAKOTA** | This spring, thirty-two childcare providers graduated from the North Dakota Women's Business Center's (NDWBC) Childcare Intensives program, a virtual course hosted in collaboration with Child Care Aware of North Dakota (CCA of ND) as part of their Shared Services Alliance.

Among its objectives, the Childcare Intensives course was established to equip and empower participants to make better-informed decisions that drive sustainable business growth. Childcare providers, including owners and directors from home settings and childcare centers to preschools, met weekly for nearly three months to collaborate and solve industry challenges.

Yolanda Livingston was one of these providers. She operates a licensed childcare center in Minot.

"This class was very encouraging. It took my planning to the next level and expanded my knowledge," said Livingston.

Livingston and her classmates covered a variety of topics during the Childcare Intensives course. The top-rated sessions were financial management, financial strategy, and establishing your team.

Client Success Director Elizabeth Phares Oren explained how they developed the curriculum.

“We collaborated extensively with our CCA of ND partners and conducted interviews with current providers to develop a curriculum that addresses the diverse needs of various entities while also meeting individual preferences,” she said.

Verla Jung, Start-up and Community Engagement Coordinator at CCA of ND worked with NDWBC to get the program off the ground.

“Working closely with childcare providers for many years, we know their challenges, tight cashflows, retaining staff, and establishing effective policies, among other things. That's why we are proud of our partnership with NDWBC's Childcare Intensives, which has helped us put childcare operators in a better position to get established and have better outcomes for their businesses and the children they care for. Through our collaboration with NDWBC, we continue building the capacity of childcare providers in our state and helping them succeed in their important work,” Jung said.

The course was structured to center on education and fostering connections. It aimed to create intentional relationships among participants, facilitators, and speakers.

“The course was a collaborative process. We brought in multiple levels of providers to maximize connections and discuss best practices across these lines. We learned time-tested advice for operational efficiencies and effective collaborating with parents/guardians from our veteran providers, which fed off the energy and innovation brought by the newer providers. It was encouraging to watch these women educate and support one another throughout the program,” Phares Oren said.

By the end of the program, participants reported a 44% increase in overall business understanding, and 96% would recommend the program to childcare providers.

“I'm proud of the dedication these women have shown through their hard work. They understand their significance as key contributors to the economic foundation of our region, essential for its growth. This group of women is leading the way in childcare in our state, and we consider it a privilege to have collaborated with them on their business journey,” said Phares Oren.