



Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware: Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System

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Greater Twin Cities
United Way

**Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware:
Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System
Reporting Period May 2015 – July 2015**

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Table of Contents

Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware	1
<i>Overview and Purpose</i>	1
<i>Sample Description</i>	2
<i>Survey Description</i>	2
<i>Report Structure</i>	2
<i>Limitations</i>	2
Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR)	3
<i>Key Findings</i>	4
<i>Respondents</i>	4
<i>Reasons for participating in Parent Aware</i>	5
<i>Experience with Parent Aware</i>	6
<i>Changes Made as a Direct Result of Participating in Parent Aware</i>	7
<i>Recommended changes to Parent Aware</i>	9
<i>Summary of Findings from Accelerated Pathways to Ratings</i>	10
Fully-Rated Providers	12
<i>Key Findings</i>	12
<i>Respondents</i>	12
<i>Impressions of Parent Aware</i>	13
<i>Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends</i>	16
<i>Reasons for joining Parent Aware</i>	16
<i>Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends</i>	17
<i>Supports Offered by Parent Aware</i>	17
<i>Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends</i>	18
<i>Quality Improvement Supports</i>	18
<i>Changes Made as a Direct Result of Participating in Parent Aware</i>	20
<i>Reflecting on the Rating Process</i>	20
<i>Summary of Findings from Fully-Rated Providers</i>	23
Non-Rated Providers	24
<i>Key Findings</i>	24
<i>Respondents</i>	24
<i>Knowledge of Parent Aware and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems</i>	25
<i>Perceptions of Quality and Parent Aware</i>	28
<i>Summary of Findings from Non-Rated Providers</i>	29
Conclusion	31
Appendix A: Survey respondent demographics	32
<i>Accelerated Pathways to Ratings</i>	32
<i>Fully-Rated Providers</i>	36
<i>Non-Rated Providers</i>	41
Appendix B: Tables comparing survey responses in 2013, 2014, and 2015	43
<i>Accelerated Pathways to Ratings</i>	43
<i>Fully-Rated Providers</i>	49
<i>Non-Rated Programs</i>	62

List of Figures

Figure 1. Location of APR respondents.....	4
Figure 2. APR providers' reported number one ranked reason for joining Parent Aware	5
Figure 3. Marketing strategies reported by APR providers.....	7
Figure 4. Location of fully-rated respondents	13
Figure 5. Providers' opinions about marketing strategies.....	14
Figure 6. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware professional development requirements	16
Figure 7. Fully-rated providers' reported number one ranked reason for enrolling in Parent Aware.....	17
Figure 8. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most helpful supports offered by Parent Aware.....	18
Figure 9. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most important quality improvements made	19
Figure 10. Areas on which fully-rated providers expect to spend post-rating quality improvement dollars.....	19
Figure 11. Location of non-rated respondents	25
Figure 12. Non-rated respondents report of how they first heard of Parent Aware.....	26
Figure 13. Would you [non-rated provider] consider joining Parent Aware?.....	27
Figure 14. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision to join Parent Aware	28
Figure 15. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision NOT to join Parent Aware..	28
Figure 16. Non-rated providers' perceptions of quality and Parent Aware	29
Figure 17. APR Respondents' mapped location	35
Figure 18. Fully-rated respondents' mapped location	40

List of Tables

Table 1. APR programs' experience with Parent Aware.....	6
Table 2. APR providers' changes made as a direct result of participating.....	8
Table 3. Degree to which APR providers reported making changes to their program as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware.....	9
Table 4. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware implementation.....	14
Table 5. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware	15
Table 6. Fully-rated providers' experiences with their Quality Coach	15
Table 7. Fully-rated providers' report of direct changes made as a result of participating in Parent Aware.....	20
Table 8. Fully-rated providers' experiences after their rating was received	21
Table 9. Non-rated providers' level of knowledge of Parent Aware/Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for early child care.....	25

List of Appendix Tables

Table A 1. Education and qualifications of APR respondents.....	32
Table A 2. Demographic characteristics of APR respondents.....	33
Table A 3. Other APR program characteristics.....	34
Table A 4. Education and qualifications of Fully-Rated respondents.....	36
Table A 5. Demographic characteristics of fully-rated respondents.....	37
Table A 6. Other Fully-rated program characteristics.....	38
Table A 7. Fully-Rated respondents' time spent working with a Quality Coach.....	39
Table A 8. Education and qualifications of non-rated respondents.....	41
Table A 9. Demographic characteristics of non-rated respondents.....	42
Table A 10. Other non-rated program characteristics.....	42
Table B 1. APR providers indicating their #1 ranked reason for joining Parent Aware.....	43
Table B 2. APR providers' experiences with Parent Aware.....	44
Table B 3. APR providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware.....	45
Table B 4. APR providers' opinions about marketing strategies.....	46
Table B 5. APR providers' direct changes made as a result of participating.....	47
Table B 6. Degree to which APR providers reported making changes to their program as a result of participating in Parent Aware.....	48
Table B 7. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware implementation.....	49
Table B 8. Fully-rated providers' opinions about marketing strategies.....	51
Table B 9. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware.....	52
Table B 10. Fully-rated providers' experience with their Quality Coach.....	52
Table B 11. Fully-rated providers indicating their #1 ranked reason for enrolling in Parent Aware.....	53
Table B 12. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most helpful supports offered by Parent Aware.....	54
Table B 13. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 category of where post-rating dollars will be spent.....	55
Table B 14. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 most important quality improvement made.....	55
Table B 15. Fully-rated providers' direct changes made as a result of participating.....	56
Table B 16. Degree to which fully-rated providers reported making changes as a direct result of Parent Aware.....	57
Table B 17. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the rating process.....	59

Table B 18. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 activity worked on most frequently with a Quality Coach.....	60
Table B 19. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 activity most worked on with a CLASS Coach.....	61
Table B 20. Non-rated providers' level of knowledge about Parent Aware	62
Table B 21. How non-rated providers first heard of Parent Aware	62
Table B 22. Would you consider joining Parent Aware?	63
Table B 23. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision to join Parent Aware.....	63
Table B 24. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision NOT to join Parent Aware.....	64
Table B 25. Non-rated provider's perceptions of quality and Parent Aware.....	65
Table B 26. Non-rated providers' use of a curriculum.....	65
Table B 27. Non-rated providers' use of a child development assessment tool.....	66

Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware

Overview and Purpose

Parent Aware is Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Parent Aware is a voluntary QRIS intended to engage, rate, market and support quality improvement in early care and education (ECE) programs. It became available to ECE programs in all 87 counties as of January 1, 2015 after a gradual rollout that started in 2012. Quality improvement that supports children's well-being and school readiness is a primary goal of Parent Aware. Engagement of ECE programs in Parent Aware and participation in meaningful improvement efforts are critical for success of the system. Data documenting providers' experiences and perceptions can make important contributions to decision-making about implementation of Parent Aware including the design of recruitment strategies and development of effective incentives for participation and quality improvement.

The purpose of this report is to present findings from surveys with ECE providers about Parent Aware. Surveys were administered to gather data from currently-rated Parent Aware providers about their participation in Parent Aware, including their motivation for participating, their experiences thus far, and changes they have made to their program as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. Additionally, providers eligible to participate but not yet enrolled in Parent Aware were surveyed about their motivations for participating or not participating. Findings are described separately for three provider types: (1) providers participating in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) process, (2) providers participating in the full-rating process, and (3) providers eligible for a full-rating but not currently enrolled in Parent Aware.

This is the third report in a series of reports about providers' perceptions of and experiences with Parent Aware. The first report was issued in 2013 and was based on data collected in 2012. The second report was issued in 2014 and based on data collected during that same year. This report reflects data collected in the spring of 2015. Most of the questions from the 2015 survey remained consistent with the previous two surveys in order to observe trends or changes in perceptions and experiences. Notable differences (changes of 10 percentage points or greater) between 2014 and 2015 are highlighted in the report, as well as trends across the 2013, 2014, and 2015 surveys. Additionally, Appendix A contains detailed tables of providers' demographic

characteristics. Appendix B contains a series of tables displaying data from all three data collection periods. The Appendices contain all of the items presented in this report in addition to items not highlighted in the main text.

Sample Description

Directors, family child care providers, or program managers from three categories of ECE programs were asked to complete an online survey:

1. Head Start programs, school-based pre-kindergarten programs, accredited community based child care centers, and accredited family child care providers with a current Parent Aware rating achieved through the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) process (n = 251)
2. Fully-rated Parent Aware licensed child care centers and family child care providers rated as December 2014 (n =264)
3. Eligible providers who have never participated in Parent Aware (n =110)

Survey Description

The surveys included questions to assess the following topics:

- General program characteristics
- Motivations for participating in Parent Aware
- Experiences with Parent Aware
- Perceptions of Parent Aware
- Changes made as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware

Report Structure

The report is structured in three sections to highlight findings from three different types of providers:

- Providers participating in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) process,
- Providers participating in the full-rating process, and
- Providers eligible for a full-rating, but not currently enrolled in Parent Aware.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is the sample reflects providers who registered an email address with Parent Aware and who had access to the internet to complete the survey in English.

Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR)

Head Start, school-based pre-kindergarten programs, early childhood special education programs, accredited child care centers and family child care providers are eligible to participate in Parent Aware through the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process. At the end of 2015, Head Start, school-based pre-kindergarten, early childhood special education programs, and accredited programs represented 59% of programs in Parent Aware, a decrease from 78% of all rated programs in 2014.¹ APR program recruitment goals set for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant in 2012 (to be accomplished by the end of 2015) were met with all types of APR programs in 2013.² Understanding more about why APR programs participate and their experiences in Parent Aware is helpful for assessing the potential for these programs to remain in Parent Aware and addressing any challenges to their ongoing participation.

The survey was administered online between May and July 2015. Most of the respondents' email addresses were obtained from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as of January 2015. The survey was also sent to APR providers who participated in evaluation activities including observations of the care and learning environment and child assessments. Email addresses for these providers were obtained by Child Trends during recruitment phone calls. In total, the survey was emailed to 623 APR providers. The response rate was 39%. Respondents identified themselves in the following way:

- Head Start (grantee directors, center managers, lead teachers) (n=22)
- School-based pre-kindergarten (school administrators, early education center coordinators, school readiness coordinators, program coordinators, program directors, community education directors, lead teachers) (n=123)
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) (ECSE coordinators, ECSE case facilitator, early childhood coordinator, school administrator) (n=5)
- Child care center (owners, regional directors, center directors, assistant directors, center managers, school administrators, education supervisors, program consultants, lead teachers) (n=94)
- Family child care providers (n=4)³

¹ Tout, K., Cleveland, J., Li, W., Starr, R., Soli, M. & Bultinck, E. (2016). The Parent Aware Evaluation: Initial Validation Report. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

² Tout, K., Cleveland, J., Friese, S., Sosinsky, L., Soli, M. & Hirilall, A. (2014). Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware: Year 2 Annual Report. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

³ The number of Parent Aware-rated accredited family child care providers in Minnesota is small compared to other types of APR programs in Parent Aware.

- Other (n=3)⁴

Key Findings

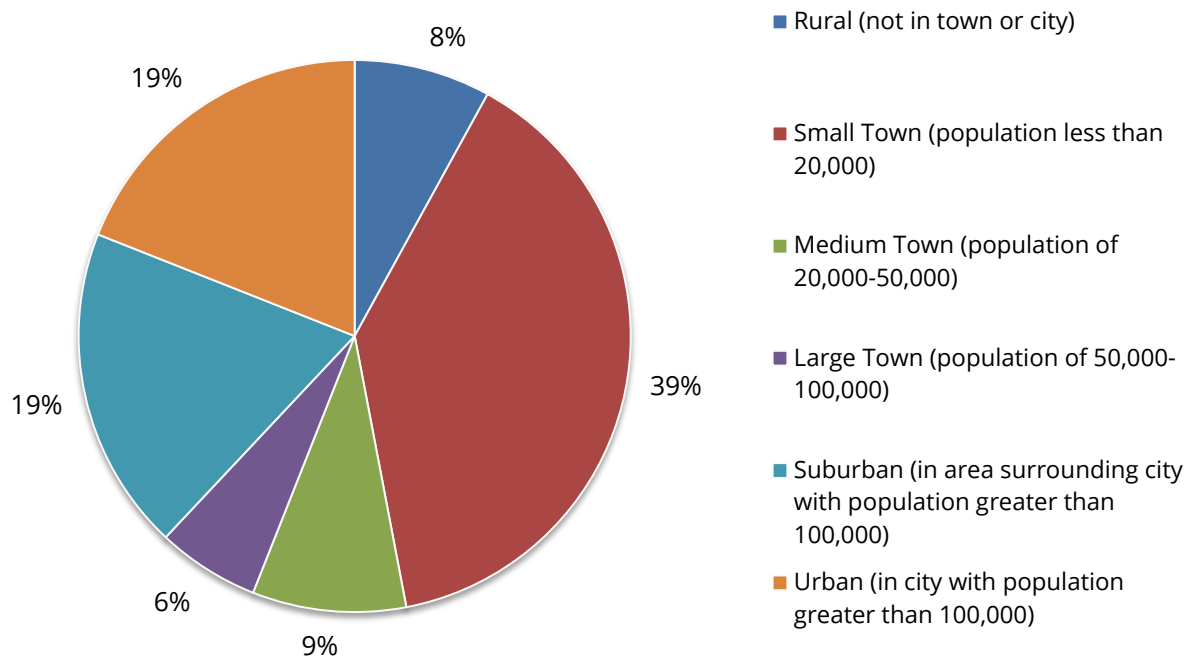
- 93% of respondents report having an overall positive impression of Parent Aware
- The most frequently cited top reason for joining Parent Aware was “To access Early Learning Scholarships.”
- The most frequently recommended improvement to Parent Aware (noted by 27% of respondents) was to increase training opportunities that are free or low-cost.

Respondents

Respondents were asked to describe the area in which their program is located. The majority of respondents reported that their program is located in a small town (39%) or an urban area (19%).

Other responses are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Location of APR respondents (n=224)



Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

⁴ There were 3 self-reported unknown APR programs that were enrolled at the time the survey was administered.

Reasons for participating in Parent Aware

Respondents were asked to rank order eight possible reasons for joining Parent Aware, with the top ranked reason being the primary reason they joined Parent Aware.

Respondents cited multiple reasons for joining Parent Aware. Figure 2 contains first-ranked-reasons for joining Parent Aware, followed by the percentage of respondents who identified each as their primary reason for joining Parent Aware. Half of respondents (51%) reported that access to Early Learning Scholarships was their first-ranked reason for joining Parent Aware. Head Start and school-based pre-kindergarten respondents in the 2013 and 2014 Provider Perceptions Surveys also reported their number one reason for joining Parent Aware was to access scholarships. Responses in Figure 2 display the percent of respondents, from most to least, who indicated that reason was their number one reason for joining Parent Aware. It should be noted that the the numerator displayed reflects the number of respondents who indicated that was their number one reason for joining. The denominator reflects the number of respondents who included that reason within their total list of rankings. Denominators vary, illustrating that some reasons were cited more frequently as a ranked reason.⁵

Figure 2. APR providers' reported number one ranked reason for joining Parent Aware

- **To access Early Learning Scholarships - 51%** (n=100/196)
- **To be part of a cutting edge early childhood initiative/program - 15%** (n=29/197)
- **To better attract families to my program - 13%** (n=24/189)
- **To access higher CCAP reimbursement rates - 11%** (n=20/188)
- **It is important for my professional development/professionalism - 6%** (n=11/190)

Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

⁵ The same online web-based tool was used to administer the survey in 2013, 2014, and 2015. However, in 2015 the format of the question varied slightly from a respondent/user perspective. In 2015, respondents were asked to drag reasons into a ranked order. The denominator for each reason reflects the number of respondents who actively ranked that item anywhere in their list of reasons for joining Parent Aware. Respondents did not have to rank each reason, so the denominators vary.

Experience with Parent Aware

APR respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about their experiences with Parent Aware (see

Table 1). The majority of respondents reported that they believe their program's rating accurately reflects the program's quality (95%) and that they will reapply for a rating when their rating expires (94%). The majority of respondents also reported that they knew what was expected in Parent Aware (85%), a notable increase compared to 2014 (68%). Most respondents agree that they would recommend that other programs join Parent Aware (78%) and that their experience with Parent Aware has been what they expected (70%). This was a notable increase from 2014, in which 59% of respondents reported their experience had been what they expected. Respondents also reported that the application process was easy (62%) and that their teachers are able to find the trainings they need for Parent Aware (59%). Half of respondents (51%) report having made changes to their program as a result of joining Parent Aware.

Table 1. APR programs' experience with Parent Aware

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The rating my program received accurately reflects my program's quality. (n=208)	3%	2%	95%
We plan to apply for Parent Aware in the future when my rating is set to expire. (n=207)	1%	5%	94%
I know what is expected of me. (n=212)	7%	8%	85%
I would recommend that other programs join Parent Aware. (n=212)	6%	16%	78%
Our experience with Parent Aware has been what we expected. (n=210)	9%	21%	70%
The Parent Aware application process was easy. (n=211)	24%	14%	62%
Teachers are able to find the professional development trainings they need. (n=207)	15%	26%	59%
We made changes to our program as a result of joining Parent Aware. (n=209)	26%	23%	51%

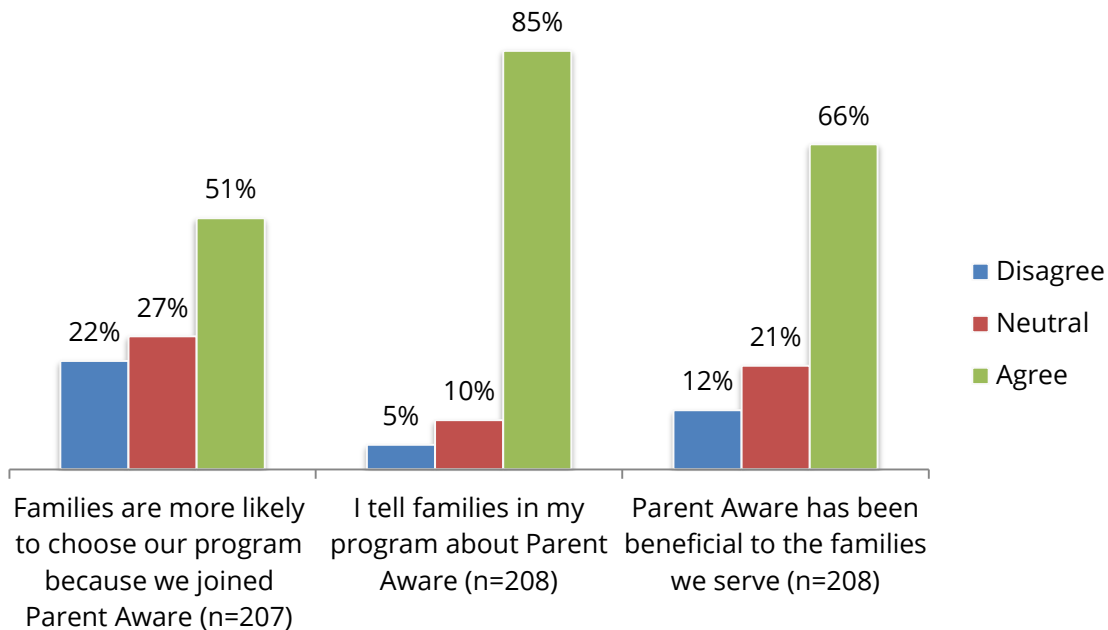
Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Respondents also had the option to provide open-ended comments about their experience with Parent Aware. Two fifths of respondents (40%) commented that they believe Parent Aware is a great service with many positive benefits, the largest benefit

being the ability to provide quality care for low-income families through Early Learning Scholarships (26%).

Respondents were asked about the extent to which Parent Aware is part of their marketing strategies. The majority of respondents reported that they tell families about Parent Aware (85%) and that Parent Aware has been beneficial to families in their programs (66%). Half of respondents agree that a Parent Aware rating is drawing families to their program (51%), a notable increase compared to 2014 (41%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Marketing strategies reported by APR providers



Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Changes Made as a Direct Result of Participating in Parent Aware

The 2015 survey included a series of new questions about changes APR providers reported making as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware (see Table 2). The majority of respondents (60%) report they now believe they play a critical role in children’s Kindergarten readiness. Half of respondents are more intentional in activity planning (51%) and are more committed to the early care and education field (51%).

Almost half of respondents pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children’s learning (46%).

Table 2. APR providers' changes made as a direct result of participating

	No	Don't Know	Yes
I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness. (n=201)	38%	2%	60%
I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children’s lives. (n=199)	47%	2%	51%
I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field. (n=199)	46%	3%	51%
I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children’s learning. (n=200)	50%	4%	46%
I increased my staff’s wages (n=200)	83%	3%	14%
I charge higher rates (n=200)	90%	2%	8%

Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Respondents were further asked about the degree to which they have made changes as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware (see

Table 3). Respondents reported they now measure children’s progress with a child assessment tool (41%) and complete more hours of training than in previous years (36%). Additionally, respondents reported changing their program’s approach to professional development (35%) and using children’s assessment results to guide individualized or group instruction (33%).

Table 3. Degree to which APR providers reported making changes to their program as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware

	N/A	No	Not Yet	Partially	Yes
I (or my staff) started measuring children's progress with a child assessment tool	32%	17%	1%	8%	41%
I (or my staff) took more hours of training than in previous years	29%	20%	5%	10%	36%
I changed our program's approach to professional development	23%	19%	5%	19%	35%
I (or my staff) started using children's assessment results to guide individualized or group instruction	38%	19%	2%	8%	33%
I (or my staff) started using a curriculum	43%	21%	1%	3%	32%
I (or my staff) started sharing children's assessment results with parents	41%	20%	1%	5%	32%
I (or my staff) started observing and documenting children's development	41%	20%	1%	8%	30%

Source: APR Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Recommended changes to Parent Aware

Respondents were asked what, if any, changes they would like to see for Parent Aware. The most frequent response noted by 12% of those who answered was that they would like to see more accessible trainings on a variety of topics. Examples of responses include:

“Change [the] curriculum and assessment trainings- (i.e. costs and contents). [It is] very plain for an already 4-year degreed or fully licensed teachers, and having to take every 2 years⁶ lacks interest for teachers who want to learn something new.”

“...when we receive information about free trainings, they often fill up so quickly that we are unable to sign up before they are full.”

“Advanced trainings for teachers and directors who have been in the field for a long time or have advanced degrees.”

Twelve programs (9%) also commented that they would recommend changes to the renewal process for APR programs. Specifically, respondents indicated that they would like to see the renewal process streamlined. Respondents noted:

“Please send email to us to let us know the steps we need to take within 3 months to continue to be part of PA. I don't want to lose the rating because I am unaware of my next steps. Do you have a timeline outline of what I need to do each year to maintain this rating? Could you send it out in an email?”

“More time and attention for the processes and requirements for programs that have been PA rated for multiple go rounds. Also, everything is still geared for "beginning" or "starting", not geared for programs that have been rated or accredited for a longer period of time.”

“It's a little frustrating and complicated to have to mail in training certificates every year to renew with center for professional development...”

Summary of Findings from Accelerated Pathways to Ratings

Participation among APR programs exceeds goals set to date. A high proportion of Head Start and school based pre-kindergarten programs joined Parent Aware during the first year of Parent Aware statewide implementation and that trend continued during the second year of statewide rollout. Density of participation among APR programs is near saturation levels for some types of programs (school-based pre-kindergarten programs: approximately 100%; Head Start: 90%; accredited center: 80%; accredited family child care: 63%)⁷ which suggests the importance of focusing on maintaining enrollment of APR programs.

⁶ Parent Aware requires programs to take trainings every 5 years, not every 2 years.

⁷ Tout et al., 2016

APR programs reported that a primary incentive for joining Parent Aware was to access Early Learning Scholarships. They report advertising their participation in Parent Aware to their families, but they are less likely to agree that the programs' Parent Aware status is the reason families enroll in their program. Overall, these results are similar to the 2014 Provider Perceptions Report; however, in 2015, more APR programs (10% more) indicated they would like increased accessibility of trainings on a larger variety of topics as well as a streamlined renewal process.

Fully-Rated Providers

The second group of providers surveyed was fully-rated child care centers and family child care programs with an active Parent Aware rating as of January 2015. Programs that had signed participation agreements, but were not yet rated, were not included in the sample. The survey was administered from May through July 2015. In total, 264 respondents completed the survey [child care center directors (n=63), licensed family child care providers (n=200) and unknown (n=1)]. The response rate was 43%.

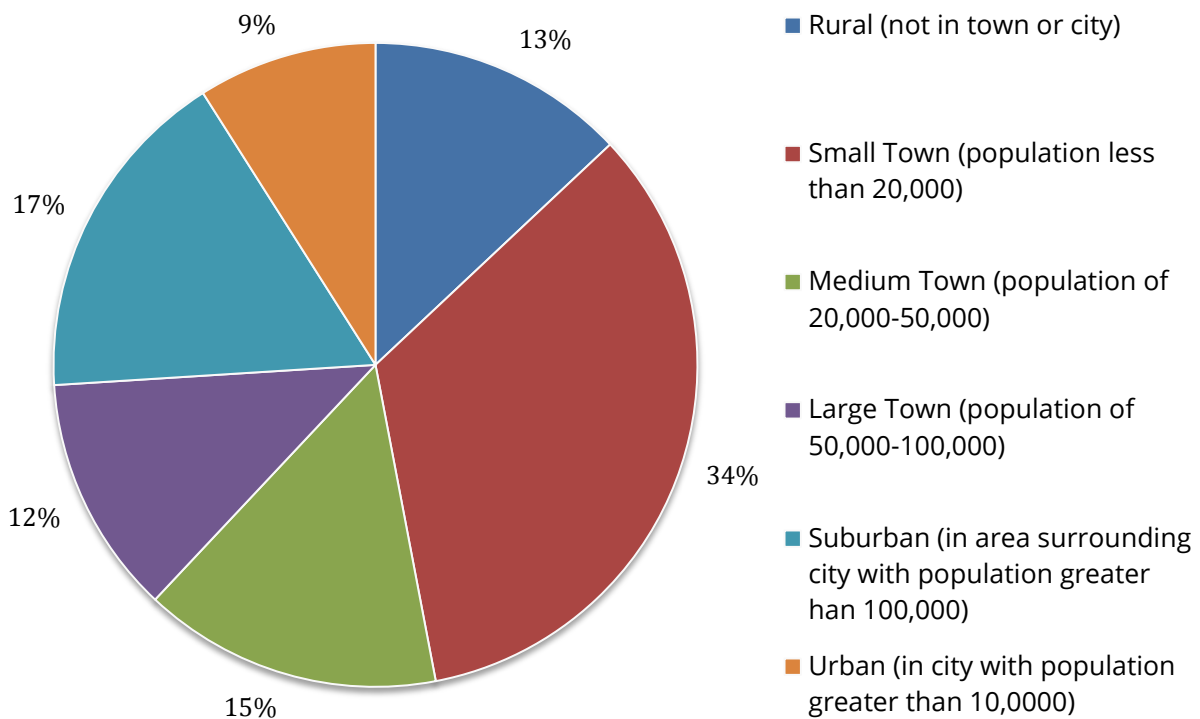
Key Findings

- 86% of fully-rated providers surveyed reported an overall positive impression of Parent Aware.
- Providers reported positive experiences with their Quality Coach. For example, 85% reported that their coach helped them learn about the Parent Aware requirements.
- 80% of fully-rated providers reported making changes to their program as a result of joining Parent Aware.
- 70% of fully-rated providers reported a positive experience tracking education and trainings with Develop.
- When asked what changes to Parent Aware they would like to see implemented, the most frequent response referred to professional development trainings and classes. Participants reported that they would like to see a variety of training options across all areas of the state.
- Respondents also commented that they would like to see changes to Parent Aware's marketing, especially marketing geared towards families, parents, and to rural areas.

Respondents

Providers were asked to describe the area in which their program is located. The majority of respondents reported that their program is located in a small town (34%), with the remaining programs almost equally distributed across area type. Figure 4 provides a detailed description of where respondents' programs are located.

Figure 4. Location of fully-rated respondents (n=261)



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Impressions of Parent Aware

Providers were asked to rate a series of statements about several areas of Parent Aware participation, including their experiences with Parent Aware overall, their opinions about marketing strategies, their experiences with Quality Coaches, and their opinions about the professional development/training requirements in Parent Aware.

The majority of providers agree that their experience has been what they expected (70%), and they would recommend that other providers join Parent Aware (70%) (see Table 4). Most providers (79%) strongly or somewhat agree that they knew what was expected of them in Parent Aware. The majority of providers (80%) agree they have made changes to their program as a result of joining Parent Aware. About 60% of providers agree that the Parent Aware orientation session was helpful.

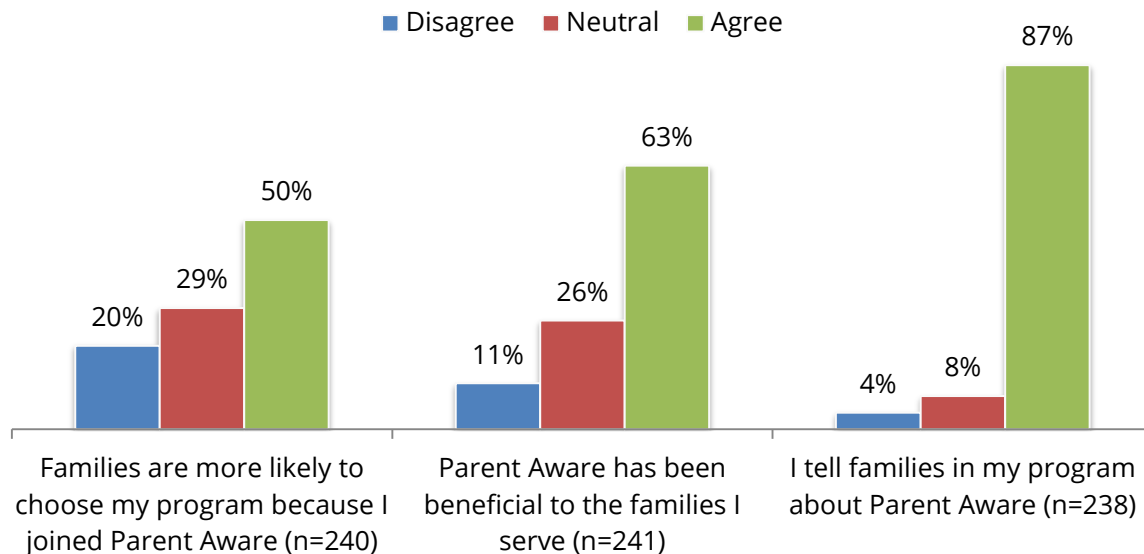
Table 4. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware implementation

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
We have made changes to our program as a result of joining Parent Aware. (n=242)	7%	13%	80%
I know what is expected of me in Parent Aware. (n=243)	10%	11%	79%
I would recommend that other programs join Parent Aware. (n=242)	9%	21%	70%
My experience with Parent Aware has been what I expected. (n=243)	15%	15%	70%
The Parent Aware Orientation Session was helpful. (n=242)	11%	30%	59%

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Respondents were asked about the extent to which Parent Aware is part of their marketing strategies. The majority of providers (87%) report telling their families about Parent Aware, but providers are less certain that families are choosing their program because of their status in Parent Aware (50%) (see Figure 5). Nearly two-thirds of fully-rated providers (63%) agree that Parent Aware has been beneficial to their families.

Figure 5. Providers' opinions about marketing strategies



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Providers were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements about the primary purpose of Parent Aware (see Table 5). Parent Aware is a multi-pronged system

which includes: 1) measuring program quality and issuing ratings, 2) providing quality improvement supports to programs, and 3) sharing and marketing program quality information to parents.

Table 5. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to help early care and education programs improve their quality. (n=242)	5%	9%	86%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to rate the quality of early care and education programs. (n=240)	10%	18%	72%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to share information with parents about the quality of early care and education programs. (n=243)	10%	24%	66%

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Eighty-six percent of providers agree that the primary purpose of Parent Aware is to help programs improve their quality. More providers see quality improvement as the primary purpose of Parent Aware as opposed to measuring quality/issuing ratings and marketing program quality to parents (though these were also cited by a majority of providers).

Because quality improvement is a key purpose of Parent Aware, it is important to understand providers' experiences and perceptions of the Parent Aware quality improvement strategies and incentives (see Table 6). Overall, the majority of fully-rated providers (73%) reported that they had sufficient time to work with their Quality Coach and that their Coach helped them understand the necessary requirements for Parent Aware (85%). Fewer providers agreed that their Professional Development Advisor (PDA) helped them understand the necessary requirements for Parent Aware (61%).

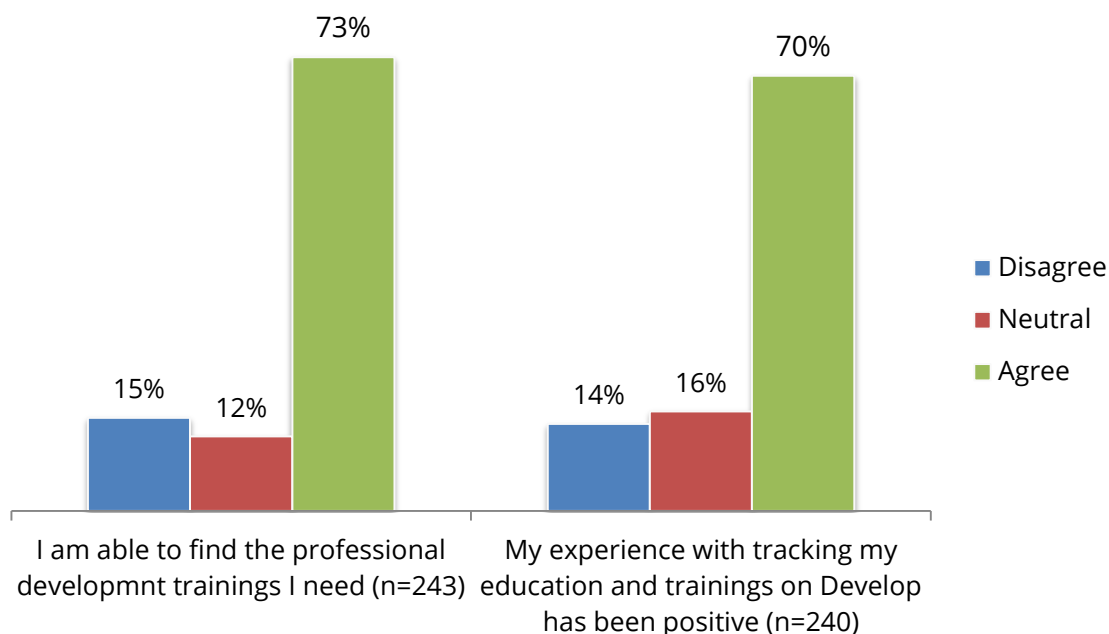
Table 6. Fully-rated providers' experiences with their Quality Coach

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My Quality Coach has helped me to understand the Parent Aware requirements. (n=241)	7%	8%	85%
The time my Quality Coach has to work with me is sufficient. (n=243)	12%	15%	73%
My Professional Development Advisor (PDA) has helped me to understand the Parent Aware requirements. (n=243)	13%	26%	61%

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

One focus of the Parent Aware quality indicators is the inclusion of training requirements related to different content areas. Most providers (73%) reported that they were able to find the professional development trainings they needed and that their experience with tracking education and trainings on Develop has been positive (70%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware professional development requirements



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Reasons for joining Parent Aware

To capture fully-rated providers' motivations for joining Parent Aware, respondents ranked possible reasons for joining. This information can be used to target recruitment efforts and strategies. Providers' reasons for joining Parent Aware can be monitored throughout Parent Aware implementation to identify any shifts in reasons or priorities over time. Figure 7 displays the percent of providers who cited various reasons as their number one reason for enrolling in Parent Aware. Responses in Figure 7 display the percent of respondents, from most to least, who indicated that reason was their number one reason for joining Parent Aware. It should be noted that the the numerator displayed reflects the number of respondents who indicated that was their number one reason for joining. The denominator reflects the number of respondents who included that reason within their total list of rankings. Denominators vary, illustrating that some

reasons were cited more frequently as a ranked reason.⁸ In 2015, nearly half of fully-rated providers (47%) ranked professional development and professionalism as their top reason for enrolling. Access to Early Learning Scholarships (35%) and post rating support dollars (33%) also received high rankings.

Figure 7. Fully-rated providers' reported number one ranked reason for enrolling in Parent Aware

- **It is important for my professional development/professionalism - 47%** (n=51/109)
- **Access to Early Learning Scholarships - 35%** (n=34/97)
- **Access to post-rating support dollars - 33%** (n=46/140)
- **Access to free or low-cost training - 25%** (n=25/100)
- **Access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates - 19%** (n=12/63)

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

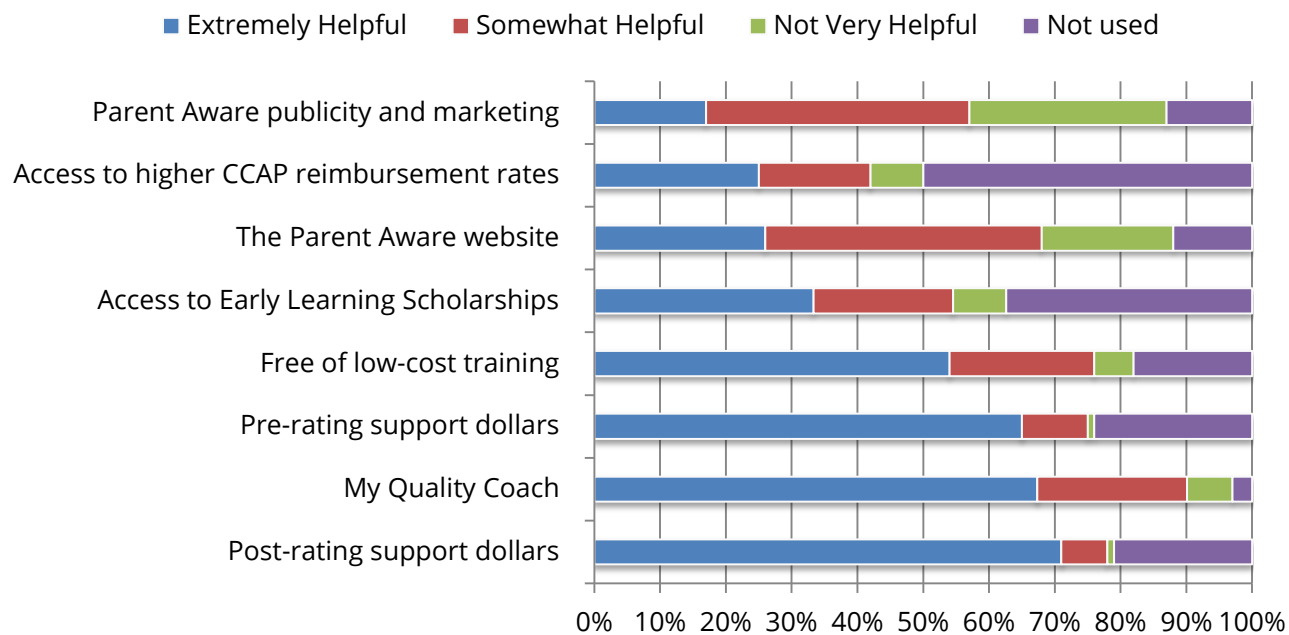
Supports Offered by Parent Aware

In order to better understand what supports fully-rated providers find most helpful, providers were asked about their perceptions of Parent Aware supports. The majority of providers (90%) reported their Quality Coach was the most helpful support (see Figure 8). This was a notable increase compared to 2014, when only 53% of respondents reported that their Quality Coach was the most helpful support. Providers also reported post-rating support dollars (78%) and pre-rating support dollars (75%) as helpful supports (see Figure 8), both notable increases compared to 2014.⁹

⁸ The same online web-based tool was used to administer the survey in 2013, 2014, and 2015. However, in 2015 the format of the question varied slightly from a respondent/user perspective. In 2015, respondents were asked to drag reasons into a ranked order. The denominator for each reason reflects the number of respondents who actively ranked that item anywhere in their list of reasons for joining Parent Aware. Respondents did not have to rank each reason, so the denominators vary.

⁹ Not all quality improvement supports are available to all providers.

Figure 8. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most helpful supports offered by Parent Aware



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

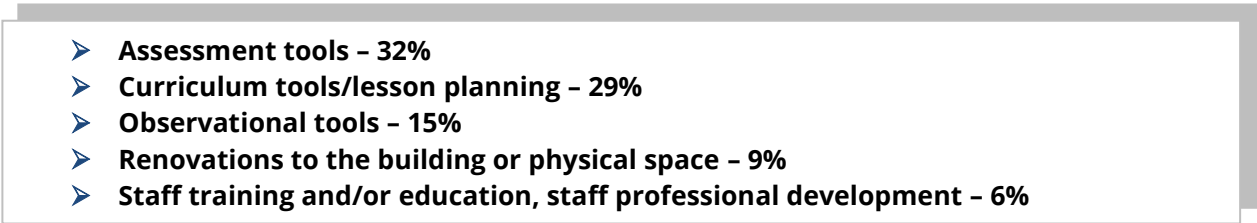
Quality Improvement Supports

After completing the full rating process, programs receiving a One-, Two-, or Three-Star rating have access to quality improvement dollars that can be used to implement changes to their program. Respondents were asked how they plan to spend the money they receive after their rating.¹⁰ Two-hundred and one fully-rated providers answered this question. As shown in Figure 9, improvement to assessment tools (32%) was most frequently ranked as the most important quality improvement made by providers. Providers also cited improvements in the use of curriculum tools and lesson planning (29%).¹¹

¹⁰ Fully-Rated providers work with their Quality Coach to determine how best to spend post-rating quality improvement support dollars. Dollars must be spent in one of three program areas: 1) Professional Development 2) Health & Safety 3) Learning & Environment.

¹¹ This item was a closed-ended question in the 2013 and 2014 surveys, but was an open-ended question in the 2015 survey.

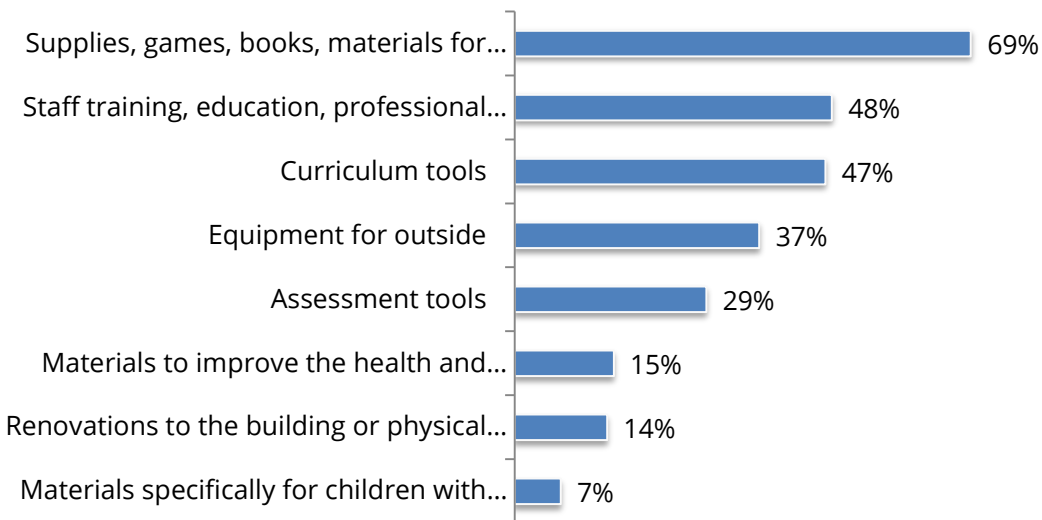
Figure 9. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most important quality improvements made (n=190)¹²



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

As shown in Figure 10. , a majority of providers (69%) expect to spend their money on supplies, games, books, and other materials for the classroom. Almost half of providers expect to spend their money on training, education, and professional development (48%) and curriculum tools (47%), both notable increases compared to the 2014 survey. Fewer providers report that they will spend their quality improvement dollars on outdoor equipment (37%) and on assessment tools (29%). Providers ranked these areas where they planned to spend post-rating dollars in the same order in both the 2014 and 2015 surveys.

Figure 10. Areas on which fully-rated providers expect to spend post-rating quality improvement dollars (n=201)



Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

¹² These responses were solicited from an open-ended response question. Respondents were not given a list of items to choose among.

Changes Made as a Direct Result of Participating in Parent Aware

The 2015 survey included new questions asking fully-rated providers to reflect on the changes they made to their program as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware (see Table 7). The majority of providers (85%) report purchasing supplies and materials for their program. In addition, 81% of providers report they now believe they are critical to Kindergarten Readiness. Over three-quarters (77%) of providers report they are more intentional in activity planning (77%). Providers also pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children’s learning (75%), and are overall more committed to the early care and education field (75%). Smaller percentages of providers report charging higher rates (18%) or increasing staff wages (10%).

Table 7. Fully-rated providers’ report of direct changes made as a result of participating in Parent Aware

	No	Don't Know	Yes
I purchased additional supplies, games, books, or materials for my program. (n=240)	13%	2%	85%
I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness. (n=240)	14%	5%	81%
I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children's lives. (n=235)	19%	3%	77%
I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children's learning. (n=238)	20%	5%	75%
I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field. (n=236)	19%	6%	75%
I charge higher rates (n=241)	80%	2%	18%
I increased my or my staff's wages (n=240)	87%	3%	10%

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Reflecting on the Rating Process

Respondents were asked to reflect on the most recent rating they received. The majority of fully-rated providers (83%) agreed that they knew what needed to be done in order to achieve the rating they wanted, a steady increase compared to the previous 2013 and 2014 surveys (73% and 78% respectively). The majority of providers (78%) agreed that the rating they received was fair (compared to 81% in 2014) and that they will reapply to Parent Aware when their rating expires (72%) (see Table 8). This is a steady decrease when compared to the previous surveys (86% in 2013 and 76% in 2014). Providers also

agreed that the due dates gave them enough time to complete the necessary paperwork (79%), another steady increase compared to the previous years' surveys (52% in 2013 and 71% in 2014). Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed that completing the Quality Documentation Packet (QDP) was easy (62%), a notable increase compared to the 2014 survey (46%) that more closely aligns to the 2013 survey (59%). Respondents were less likely to agree that the QDP was responsive to groups of different cultural backgrounds (49%), which is similar to the 2014 survey results (41%).

Table 8. Fully-rated providers' experiences after their rating was received

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I knew what I needed to do in order to get the rating I wanted. (n=238)	7%	10%	83%
The due dates within Parent Aware give me enough time to complete the necessary paperwork. (n=240)	9%	12%	79%
The rating I received was fair. (n=237)	9%	20%	78%
I plan to apply for a Parent Aware rating in the future when my rating is set to expire. (n=238)	8%	20%	72%
The rating I received accurately reflects my program's quality. (n=240)	8%	24%	68%
The Quality Documentation Packet was easy to complete. (n=239)	24%	14%	62%
The Quality Documentation Packet was sensitive to groups of different cultural backgrounds. (n=240)	3%	48%	49%
I have recommendations about how the rating process could be improved in the future. (n=239)	8%	45%	47%

Source: Fully-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

A key component of the Parent Aware full-rating process is providers must declare their goal rating approximately two to three months before they submit their application materials. Fully-rated providers were asked why they chose the Star rating goal they chose. The most frequent responses described specific star ratings as being the best fit for programs; however, the context for this response differs between programs setting a low- and high-Star rating goal. Providers who chose a One and Two-Star goal rating viewed their rating as the best fit because it was a reachable goal, whereas providers who chose a Three- and Four-Star goal rating believed it was a best fit because they had already met the requirements and were qualified, especially regarding experience and education. Examples of responses include:

- *"It was a rating I felt comfortable I could achieve." (Two-Star)*
- *"My years of experience in ECE and my education allowed me to choose a 4 star rating."*
- *"We offer a great program with excellent, experienced teachers and believed we deserved a 4 star rating."*

In addition, fully-rated providers were asked if they would like to see any improvements made to Parent Aware. The most frequent responses addressed the content and accessibility of professional development trainings and classes and the need to educate and market Parent Aware to the public. Fifty-two percent of providers who commented on trainings cited concerns about the variety of training options. Examples of responses about trainings/classes includes:

- *"More training that is deeper in content."*
- *"...More local, rural trainings. We can't afford to send our staff that far away for their trainings."*
- *"I have a four year degree in child development, and my trainings I have to take are all the same as someone with no degree. There needs to be a fast track or other high level trainings for us..."*
- *"Better trainings, most of the trainings are redundant, and don't totally relate to each individual center."*

Finally, fully-rated providers commented that they would like to see changes in marketing of Parent Aware, especially to families, parents, and to rural areas. Examples of responses related to marketing includes:

- *"More advertisements so parents and providers realize how it could benefit them."*
- *"...Parent Aware isn't doing much to promote our rated program. Parents don't understand the value of enrolling in a 4 star program, because they haven't been educated in what that means, so they aren't looking for Parent Aware programs."*
- *"In classifying the rated providers, Parent Aware doesn't indicate that the Parent Aware rating can be a progression of learning and development and the rating isn't a "grading" system given to the provider by Parent Aware, but chosen by the participant to temporarily achieve."*
- *"I wish more providers would participate. I think there's a perception by some that, if you can't have 4 stars, why do it? Also, I believe many providers are afraid to have someone come into their home to observe them. I truly wish I could help them*

understand how much more they would enjoy their jobs if they would take the time to do the very best job they can, which includes participating in Parent Aware.”

Summary of Findings from Fully-Rated Providers

Providers with full Parent Aware ratings report overall positive impressions of Parent Aware (86%). The majority of providers (70%) report that their experience with Parent Aware thus far has been what they expected; most providers (85%) report that their Quality Coach was helpful in teaching them the Parent Aware requirements. And, 78% of fully-rated providers believe the rating they received was fair. A small, but noteworthy percentage of providers (18%) charge higher rates as a result of participating in Parent Aware, a notable difference compared to providers in APR programs (8%). Providers report that the required trainings are often redundant and not easily accessible, and they would like a greater variety of training and class options offered. Fully-rated providers also commented on the need for more Parent Aware marketing, especially geared towards families.

Non-Rated Providers

Licensed family child care programs and licensed child care centers located in counties where Parent Aware is available completed an online survey about their level of interest and awareness of Parent Aware.¹³ Programs that have ever participated in Parent Aware or are currently participating were not eligible to complete the survey. The sample was obtained from an export of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral data services (NACCRRAware) in March, 2015. Eleven hundred thirty-nine providers were emailed the request to complete the survey. The response rate for the survey was 9%.¹⁴ One-hundred and ten eligible providers completed survey questions. The survey was fielded between May and July 2015. Seventy-five percent of the providers who completed the survey were family child care providers (n=82) and 25% of respondents were directors of child care centers (n=28).

Key Findings

- 98% of respondents have heard of Parent Aware.
- 33% of respondents reported having attended a Parent Aware Information Session.
- 43% of those surveyed reported knowing “a little” about Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for early care and education programs.
- Providers primarily learned about Parent Aware through Child Care Aware (30%), a training (21%), or from another early care and education/child care provider (15%).
- When asked if they would consider joining Parent Aware, 42% said “No,” 25% said “Yes,” and 32% said they “Don’t Know” if they would join Parent Aware.
- Providers believe that quality is important when parents select child care (94%); however, providers are less likely to agree that Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents (30%) and early care and education programs (39%). They also are less likely to agree that parents should consider a program’s Parent Aware rating when choosing child care (25%).

Respondents

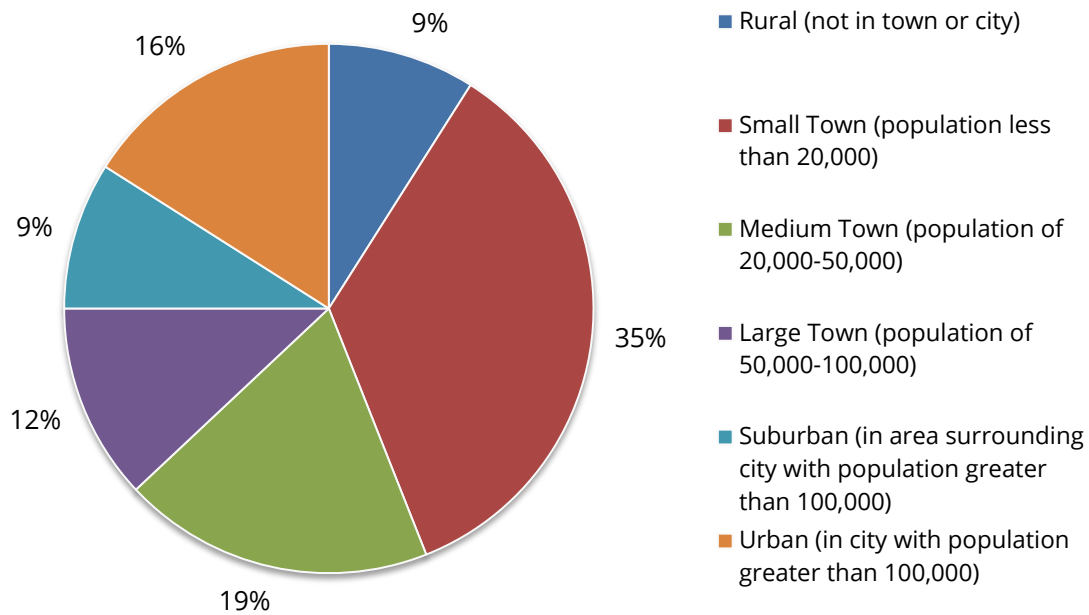
Non-rated providers were asked to describe the area in which their program is located. The majority of respondents reported that their program is located in a small town (35%)

¹³ When Minnesota won the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant award in December 2011, Parent Aware began a gradual statewide “roll-out” to all counties in Minnesota. As of 1/1/2015, Parent Aware is available in all counties throughout the state.

¹⁴ The response rate in 2014 was 12%.

or medium town (19%). See Figure 11 for a more detailed description of where respondents' programs were located.

Figure 11. Location of non-rated respondents (n=104)



Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Knowledge of Parent Aware and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Providers were asked how much they know about Parent Aware and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Just under half of providers (43%) reported knowing a little and 28% reported knowing a lot (see

Table 9).

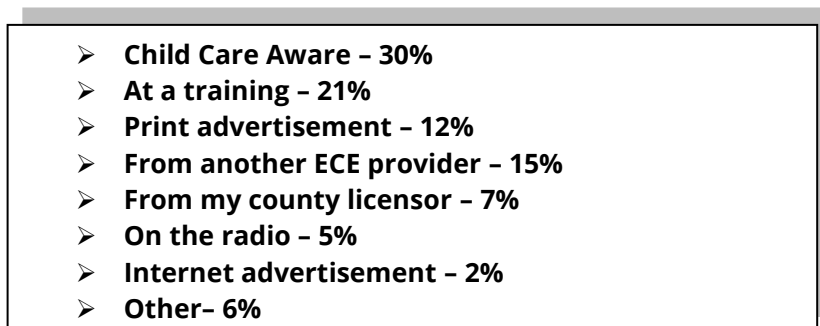
Table 9. Non-rated providers' level of knowledge of Parent Aware/Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for early child care (n=110)

	Percent
A Lot	28%
A Little	43%
Not Very Much	25%
Don't Know	4%

Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Non-rated providers were asked to identify how they had first heard of Parent Aware. The most frequent response from providers was that they first heard about Parent Aware through Child Care Aware (30%), a decrease compared to the 2014 survey in which 41% of respondents heard about Parent Aware through Child Care Aware. Training sessions, print advertisements, and other ECE providers were also cited as sources of information (see Figure 12).

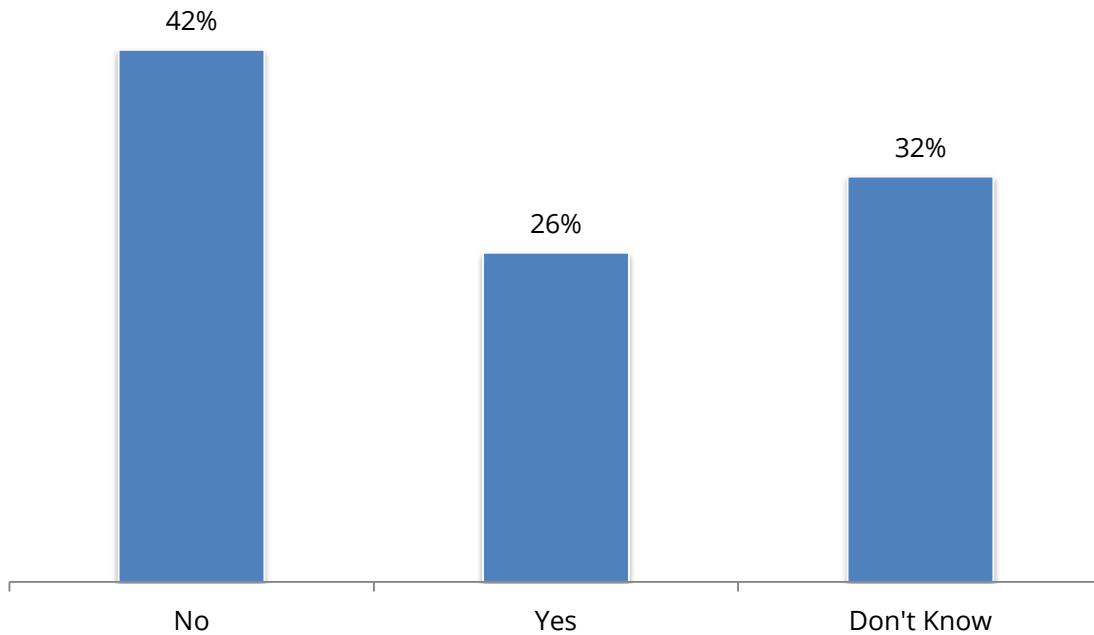
Figure 12. Non-rated respondents report of how they first heard of Parent Aware (n=109)



Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Non-rated providers were asked if they would consider joining Parent Aware. About one-third (32%) do not know whether they would join Parent Aware; about two-fifths (42%) say they will not join Parent Aware, while just over one-fourth (26%) say they will join (see Figure 13). Compared to the 2013 and 2014 surveys, providers are becoming more decisive about whether they would consider joining Parent Aware, with the frequency of respondents reporting “yes” and “no” increasing over time since 2013, and the percent of providers reporting they don’t know whether they would join decreasing since 2013 (see Table B 21).

Figure 13. Would you [non-rated provider] consider joining Parent Aware? (n=106)



Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Non-rated providers were asked to identify possible scenarios that might affect their decision to join or not join Parent Aware. Respondents were instructed to select two possible scenarios; however, some selected more (see Figure 14 and

Figure 15). In the figures, the percentage next to each statement reflects the percent of respondents who checked that statement as a reason that would affect their decision to join or not to join Parent Aware. Almost half (47%) of non-rated providers reported that access to free or low-cost training would affect their decision to join Parent Aware. Providers also reported they would join Parent Aware to better attract families (32%), a notable increase compared to the 2014 survey in which only 17% of providers reported this as affecting their decision to join. In contrast, providers also reported that they don't need Parent Aware to attract families to their programs (61%), and that joining Parent Aware is not worth the investment of their time (33%). One other notable increase is among the percent of providers who report that they do not believe early care and education programs should be rated. In 2015, 25% of providers cited this as a reason affecting their decision-making not to join, an increase of 10% compared to 2014.

Figure 14. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision to join Parent Aware (n=85)

- **To access free or low cost training - 47%**
- **To better attract families to my program - 32%**
- **It is important for my professional development/professionalism - 29%**
- **If someone else in my organization required my program to participate - 22%**
- **To access Early Learning Scholarships - 15%**
- **To access pre-rating support dollars - 14%**
- **To access higher CCAP reimbursement rates - 12%**
- **I'd join Parent Aware for another reason not listed - 12%**
- **To access post-rating support dollars - 12%**
- **To be part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative/program - 7%**
- **To access coaching supports in my program - 2%**
- **To access CLASS coaching - 1%**

Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Figure 15. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision NOT to join Parent Aware (n=101)

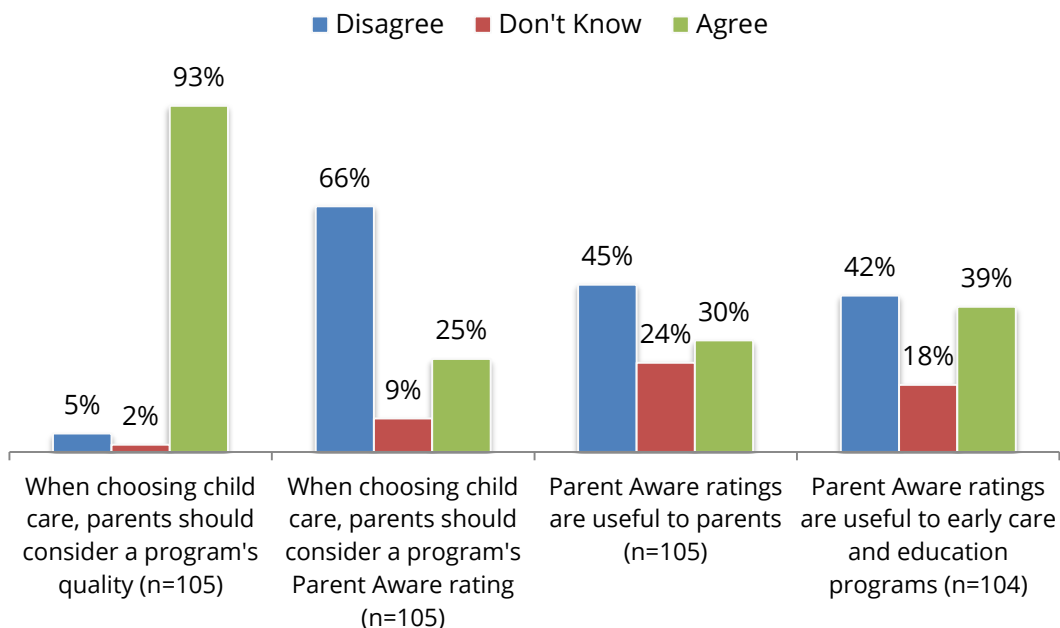
- **I don't need it to attract families to my program - 61%**
- **It is not worth the investment of my time - 33%**
- **I don't trust that Parent Aware rating will accurately reflect my program's quality - 32%**
- **I don't believe early care and education programs should be rated - 25%**
- **The application/rating process is difficult - 19%**
- **I am waiting to hear from other programs/providers about their experience first - 16%**
- **There is not enough financial incentive to join - 12%**
- **I don't need to improve the quality of my program - 6%**
- **Parent Aware does not provide enough support for programs/providers - 6%**

Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Perceptions of Quality and Parent Aware

Non-rated providers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about how a Parent Aware rating may affect parents' decision-making when choosing child care for their child (see Figure 16). Nearly all providers (93%) believe that quality is important when parents are in the process of choosing an early care and education program for their child. This is similar to the percent of non-rated providers (90%) in 2014 who agreed quality should be considered in child care decision-making. About a quarter of non-rated providers (25%) agree that Parent Aware ratings should also be considered in child care decision-making (see Figure 16). About a third of providers also agree that Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents (30%) and useful to early care and education programs (39%), similar to providers in 2014.

Figure 16. Non-rated providers' perceptions of quality and Parent Aware



Source: Non-rated Provider Survey, 2015, Child Trends

Summary of Findings from Non-Rated Providers

Non-rated providers represent licensed early care and education programs in Minnesota that are being targeted for enrollment in Parent Aware. The majority of respondents (75%) were family child care providers, and about one-third were located in small towns (35%).

The results provide a descriptive picture of how providers not yet affiliated with Parent Aware perceive it. The majority of respondents (98%) have heard of Parent Aware, but few (28%) indicated they know a lot about it. While some providers have developed an opinion about whether or not they will enroll in Parent Aware, about one-third (32%) say they don't know yet if they will enroll; this is a steady decrease, however, compared to the 2013 and 2014 surveys. Providers are mixed in their interest level and belief that Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents. They agree (93%) that parents should consider a program's quality when choosing child care for their child. Non-rated providers are becoming more decisive in their perceptions of Parent Aware and its involvement in child care decision-making.

Similar to previous years of the survey, non-rated providers cited the primary reason affecting their decision not to join Parent Aware is they do not need it to attract families to their program. However, a greater percentage of providers in 2015 (32%) compared to

2014 (17%) reported that attracting families to their program may be a motivating factor to join Parent Aware. Messages geared toward non-rated providers about parents' interest in and use of the ratings may increase providers' trust that the ratings are meaningful and helpful to parents and children.

Conclusion

This report is the third in a series of reports that provides information about the opinions and perceptions of providers with unique characteristics and experiences with Parent Aware. Two groups of providers (APR providers and fully-rated providers) are currently participating in Parent Aware. Their responses provide insights into the benefits and the challenges of participating in Parent Aware. The third group of providers are not and have never been affiliated with Parent Aware. They are eligible but have not yet enrolled. The perceptions and experiences of this group of un-affiliated providers can help illuminate new communication and support strategies for engaging providers in Parent Aware.

Across responses to the three surveys, common themes emerged:

- A majority of rated providers report having a overall positive impression of Parent Aware.
- Similar to 2014, providers value incentives and supports and view quality improvement as a primary purpose of Parent Aware. Access to quality improvement supports such as coaching and funds for professional development trainings are important to providers' decision-making about Parent Aware. Access to scholarships is still the number one motivating factor to participate in Parent Aware for APR programs.
- Providers' perceptions of parents' interest and use of Parent Aware ratings vary. APR and fully-rated providers tell parents about their rating and believe the ratings are useful to parents. They are less certain that parents use the rating to select their program. Similar to previous years, non-rated providers' beliefs about the usefulness of Parent Aware to families remain steady; non-rated providers agree that families should consider a program's quality when choosing child care for their child, but are less likely to agree that parents should consider a program's Parent Aware rating when selecting child care. Non-rated providers may benefit from information that demonstrates how Parent Aware ratings are meaningful measures of program quality and how parents are responding over time to Parent Aware ratings. Increasing the number of non-rated providers who are interested in and enroll in Parent Aware is important for improving access to rated programs for all children and families in Minnesota.

Appendix A: Survey respondent demographics

Accelerated Pathways to Ratings

Table A 1. Education and qualifications of APR respondents

	School Based	Child Care Center	Head Start
Highest Level of Education	(n = 123)	(n = 94)	(n = 22)
High School Diploma or GED	0.00%	1.14%	0.00%
Some college, but no degree	0.93%	11.36%	0.00%
Two year college degree in non-related field	7.41%	1.10%	0.00%
Two year college degree in Early Childhood or related field	0.93%	7.95%	0.00%
Bachelor's Degree in non-related field	10.19%	20.45%	23.53%
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or related field	45.37%	25.00%	47.06%
Graduate Degree in non-related field	12.96%	4.55%	11.76%
Graduate Degree in Early Childhood or related field	28.70%	20.45%	17.65%
Certificates	(n = 103)	(n = 87)	(n = 17)
CDA	4.85%	14.94%	17.65%
Years of experience	(n = 108)	(n = 90)	(n = 17)
Average number of years in current position	11.73	7.95	8.08
Average number of years in early care and education since 18 years old	21.15	19.22	21.82

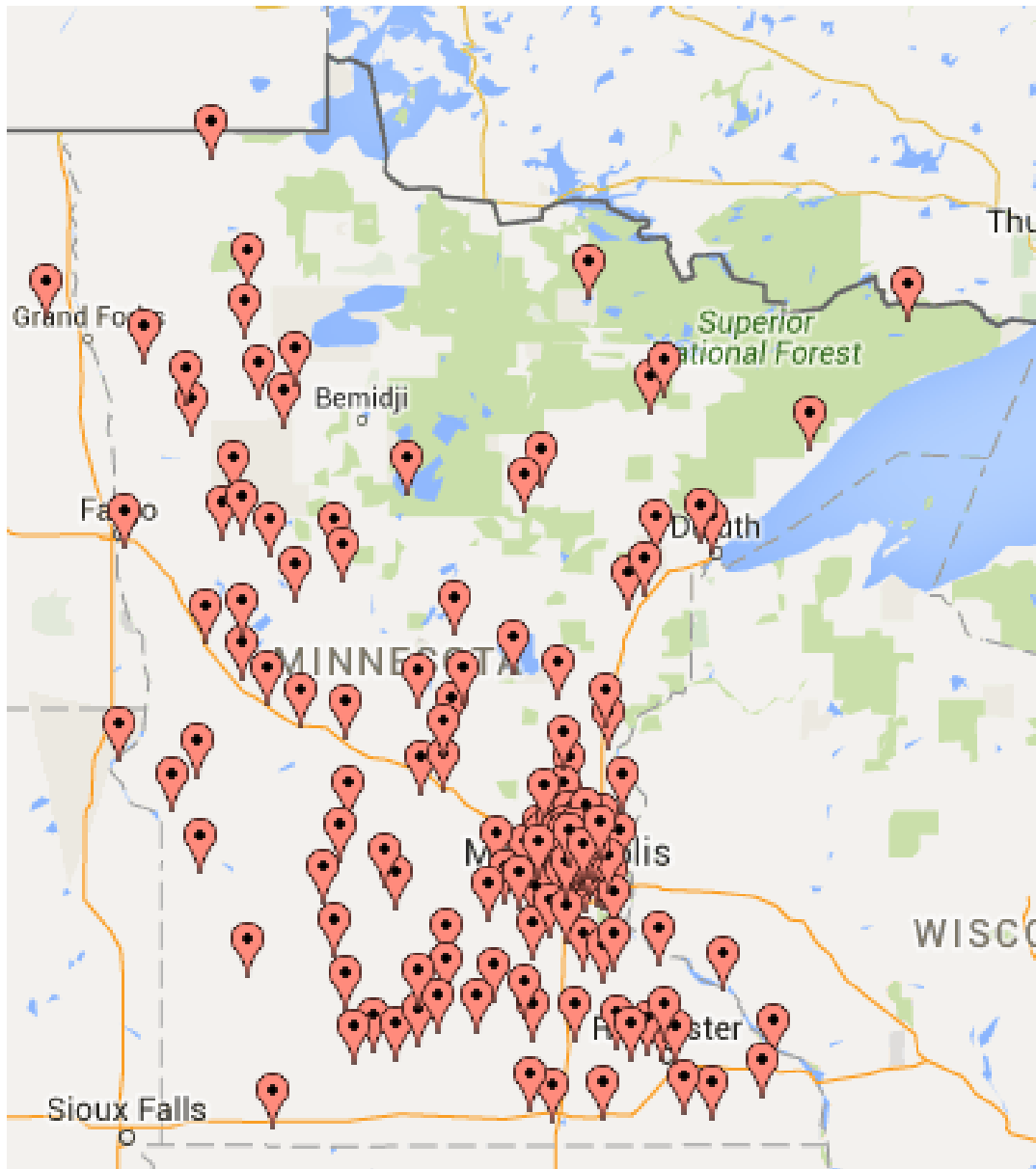
Table A 2. Demographic characteristics of APR respondents

	School Based	Child Care Center	Head Start
Age	(n=108)	(n=88)	(n=15)
18-24	0	1.14	0
25-30	2.78	7.95	0
31-40	24.07	36.36	6.67
41-50	26.85	27.27	33.33
51-60	28.70	20.45	40
61 or older	17.59	6.82	20
Rachial/Ethnic group	(n=107)	(n=90)	(n=17)
White/Caucasian	94.69	88.89	94.12
Black/African American	1.87	4.44	0
African	0.93	1.11	0
Asian	1.87	2.22	0
Hispanic/Latino-Mexican	0	2.22	0
Other	0	1.11	5.88
Language spoken at home	(n=105)	(n=89)	(n=17)
English	97.14	98.88	100
Hmong	1.90	1.12	0
Other	1.90	0	0
Gender	(n=108)	(n=89)	(n=17)
Female	97.22	95.51	88.24
Male	2.78	4.49	11.76

Table A 3. Other APR program characteristics

	School Based	Child Care Center	Head Start
Other	(n=0)	(n=93)	(n=0)
For-Profit	0	55.91	0
Not-for-profit	0	44.09	0
The number of children:	(n=109)	(n=91)	(n=18)
Enrolled	107.67	77.39	291.89
Receive Child Care Assistance	8.64	19.23	71.56
Use an Early Learning Scholarship	12.02	4.56	13.94
Have an Individualized Education Plan	19.61	2.94	40.44
Are Dual Language Learners	10.3	6.6	59.82

Figure 17. APR Respondents' mapped location



Fully-Rated Providers

Table A 4. Education and qualifications of Fully-Rated respondents

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Highest Level of Education	(n = 123)	(n = 94)
High School Diploma or GED	1.92%	17.33%
Some college, but no degree	17.31%	20.67%
Two year college degree in non-related field	5.77%	20.00%
Two year college degree in Early Childhood or related field	11.54%	13.33%
Bachelor's Degree in non-related field	23.08%	17.33%
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or related field	36.54%	39.33%
Graduate Degree in non-related field	11.54%	0.00%
Graduate Degree in Early Childhood or related field	9.62%	5.33%
Certificates	(n = 61)	(n = 193)
CDA	7.94%	17.91%
Years of experience	(n = 62)	(n = 201)
Average number of years in current position	12.9	23.95
Average number of years in early care and education since 18 years old	19.61	18.62

Table A 5. Demographic characteristics of fully-rated respondents

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Age	(n=61)	(n=197)
18-24	0	0.51
25-30	9.83	3.05
31-40	24.59	30.96
41-50	32.79	37.06
51-60	22.95	23.86
61 or older	9.83	4.57
Rachial/Ethnic group	(n=60)	(n=201)
White/Caucasian	92.06	90.55
Black/African American	3.33	2.99
African	0	0.99
Asian	0	0.99
Hispanic/Latino-Mexican	0	0.99
Other	0	3.48
Language spoken at home	(n=61)	(n=195)
English	100	95.38
Somali	0	1.03
Other	0	3.59
Gender	(n=61)	(n=201)
Female	100	98.01
Male	0	1.99

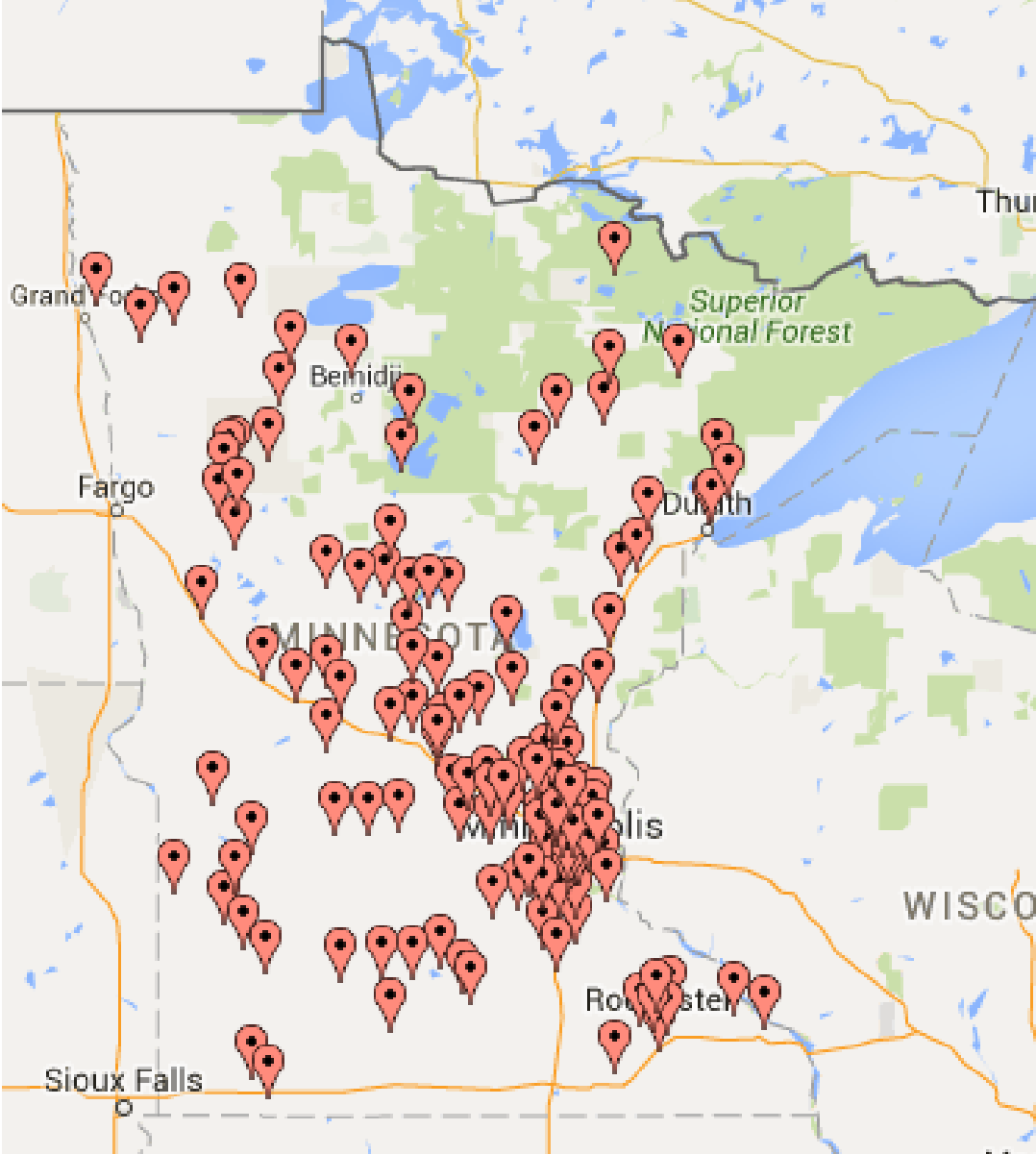
Table A 6. Other Fully-rated program characteristics

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Other Program Characteristics	(n=61)	-
For-Profit	45.90%	-
Not-for-profit	54.09%	-
Building Quality	69.84% (n=61)	73.63% (n=198)
Program is currently full	53.97% (n=61)	71.64% (n=200)
Program currently has a waiting list	55.56% (n=60)	59.7% (n=200)
The number of children:		
Enrolled	68.28 (n=62)	9.01 (n=199)
Receive Child Care Assistance	10.14 (n=60)	1.03 (n=193)
Use an Early Learning Scholarship	5.22 (n=61)	0.65 (n=189)
Have an Individualized Education Plan	2.63 (n=58)	0.38 (n=188)
Are Dual Language Learners	3.98 (n=56)	0.45 (n=183)

Table A 7. Fully-Rated respondents' time spent working with a Quality Coach

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Months worked with Quality Coach in 1 year	(n=60)	(n=191)
0 months	13.33	12.04
1-2 months	25	19.90
3-4 months	23.33	18.32
5-6 months	16.67	18.85
More than 6 months	21.67	30.89
Hours/month worked with Quality Coach	(n=60)	(n=186)
0<5 hours per month	67.74	70.97
6-10 hours per month	25.81	16.67
11-15 hours per month	0	6.45
15-20 hours per month	1.61	3.23
More than 20 hours per month	4.84	2.69

Figure 18. Fully-rated respondents' mapped location



Non-Rated Providers

Table A 8. Education and qualifications of non-rated respondents

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Highest Level of Education	(n = 28)	(n = 77)
High School Diploma or GED	3.57%	15.58%
Some college, but no degree	3.57%	27.27%
Two year college degree in non-related field	3.57%	12.99%
Two year college degree in Early Childhood or related field	10.71%	9.09%
Bachelor's Degree in non-related field	17.86%	16.88%
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or related field	35.71%	10.39%
Graduate Degree in non-related field	3.57%	2.60%
Graduate Degree in Early Childhood or related field	21.43%	5.19%
Certificates	(n = 27)	(n = 76)
CDA	7.41%	6.58%
Years of experience	(n = 28)	(n = 77)
Average number of years in current position	13.19	17.42
Average number of years in early care and education since 18 years old	21.39	19.73
Median years of experience in ECE since 18 years old	20.5	19

Table A 9. Demographic characteristics of non-rated respondents

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Age	(n=25)	(n=75)
18-24	0	0
25-30	8%	5.33%
31-40	16%	30.67%
41-50	36%	21.33%
51-60	20%	34.67%
61 or older	16%	8%
Racial/Ethnic group	(n=26)	(n=76)
White/Caucasian	100	99.02
African	0	0.98
Language spoken at home	(n=26)	(n=78)
English	96.15	96.15
Other	3.85	3.85

Table A 10. Other non-rated program characteristics

	Child Care Center	Family Child Care Provider
Other Program Characteristics	(n=27)	(n=78)
For-Profit	22.22	91.03
Not-for-profit	77.78	8.97
Full Program	46.43 (n=28)	92.21 (n=77)
Waiting List	55.56 (n=27)	74.32 (n=75)
The number of children:	(n=22)	(n=72)
Enrolled	61.05	8.56
Receive Child Care Assistance	6.62 (n=21)	0.33 (n=67)
Have an Individualized Education Plan	3.81 (n=16)	0.37 (n=68)
Are Dual Language Learners	7.12 (n=17)	0.27 (n=60)

Appendix B: Tables comparing survey responses in 2013, 2014, and 2015 ¹⁵

Accelerated Pathways to Ratings

Table B 1. APR providers indicating their #1 ranked reason for joining Parent Aware¹⁶

	2013	2014	2015
To access the Early Learning Scholarships	36% (n=16/44)	47% (n=109/235)	51% (n=100/196)
To be a part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative/program	23% (n=10/44)	13% (n=31/235)	15% (n=29/197)
To better attract families to my program	18% (n=8/44)	7% (n=17/235)	13% (n=24/189)
To access higher CCAP reimbursement rates	-	7% (n=17/235)	11% (n=20/188)
Someone else in my program requires my program to participate	0% (n=0/44)	8% (n=18/235)	6% (n=11/192)
It is important for my professional development/professionalism	21% (n=9/44)	4% (n=9/235)	6% (n=11/190)
I joined Parent Aware for another reason not listed	0% (n=0/44)	2% (n=5/235)	4% (n=7/183)
To access free or low-cost training	-	-	1% (n=2/190)

¹⁵ Items listed below the thick bar in each table are items reported in the Appendix only.

¹⁶ It should be noted that the online survey collector used to administer the survey in 2013, 2014, and 2015 remained the same. However, researchers noted that in 2015, the format of the question varied slightly from a respondent/user perspective. In 2015, respondents were asked to drag reasons into a ranked order. The denominator for each reason reflects the number of respondents who actively ranked that item anywhere in their list of reasons for joining Parent Aware.

Table B 2. APR providers' experiences with Parent Aware

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The rating my program received accurately reflects my program's quality	-	-	-	2%	4%	94%	3%	2%	95%
We plan to apply for Parent Aware in the future when my rating is set to expire	2%	9%	89%	2%	6%	92%	1%	5%	94%
I know what is expected of me	-	-	-	15%	17%	68%	7%	8%	85%
I would recommend that other programs join Parent Aware	7%	16%	77%	9%	18%	73%	6%	16%	78%
Our experience with Parent Aware has been what we expected	21%	28%	51%	14%	27%	59%	9%	21%	70%
The Parent Aware application was easy	11%	5%	84%	16%	24%	60%	24%	14%	62%
Teachers are able to find the professional development trainings they need	32%	23%	45%	22%	27%	51%	15%	26%	59%
We have made changes to our program as a result of joining Parent Aware	52%	18%	30%	26%	18%	56%	26%	23%	51%
The rating I received was fair	-	-	-	2%	3%	95%	2%	5%	93%
I am able to find the professional development trainings I need	-	-	-	16%	22%	62%	12%	22%	65%
I believe my program is of higher quality because we joined Parent Aware	-	-	-	20%	26%	54%	17%	27%	56%

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My county licenser is familiar with Parent Aware	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%	60%	33%
I have talked to my county licenser about Parent Aware	-	-	-	-	-	-	36%	46%	18%
I received information about Parent Aware from my Food Program Advisor	-	-	-	-	-	-	54%	43%	3%

Table B 3. APR providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware

	2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to help early care and education programs improve their quality	7%	8%	85%	5%	12%	83%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to share information with parents about the quality of early care and education programs	11%	17%	72%	8%	13%	79%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to rate the quality of early care and education programs	14%	17%	69%	10%	18%	72%

Table B 4. APR providers' opinions about marketing strategies

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Families are more likely to choose our program because we joined Parent Aware	32%	36%	32%	31%	28%	41%	22%	27%	51%
We tell families in our program about Parent Aware	5%	9%	86%	5%	11%	84%	5%	10%	85%
Parent Aware has been beneficial to the families we serve	32%	38%	30%	21%	21%	58%	12%	22%	66%
When choosing child care for their child, parents should consider program's quality	-	-	-	1%	2%	96%	1%	4%	95%
We display the marketing materials given to us by Parent Aware	-	-	-	10%	9%	81%	11%	8%	81%
When choosing child care for their child, parents should consider a program's Parent Aware rating	-	-	-	7%	14%	79%	5%	15%	80%
Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents	-	-	-	9%	19%	72%	5%	17%	78%
Parent Aware ratings are useful to early care and education programs	-	-	-	12%	13%	75%	7%	16%	76%

Table B 5. APR providers' direct changes made as a result of participating

	2015		
	No	Don't Know	Yes
I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness.	38%	2%	60%
I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children's lives.	47%	2%	51%
I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field	46%	3%	51%
I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children's learning	50%	4%	46%
I changed the daily routine of my program	78%	1%	21%
I serve more children who receive county child care assistance (CCAP)	68%	12%	20%
I extended my program's hours of operation	82%	1%	17%
I increased my or my staff's wages	83%	3%	14%
Our program has opened a new classroom (for child care centers only)	2%	85%	13%
I serve more children who speak a language other than English	83%	4%	13%
I serve more children with special needs	83%	5%	12%
I changed the food served in my program	89%	1%	10%
I charge higher rates	90%	2%	8%

Table B 6. Degree to which APR providers reported making changes to their program as a result of participating in Parent Aware

	2015				
	N/A	No	Not Yet	Partially	Yes
I (or my staff) started measuring children's progress with a child assessment tool	32%	17%	1%	8%	41%
I (or my staff) took more hours of training than in previous years	29%	20%	5%	10%	36%
I changed our program's approach to professional development	23%	19%	5%	19%	35%
I (or my staff) started using children's assessment results to guide individualized or group instruction	38%	19%	2%	8%	33%
I (or my staff) started using a curriculum	43%	21%	1%	3%	32%
I (or my staff) started sharing children's assessment results with parents	41%	20%	1%	5%	32%
I (or my staff) started observing and documenting children's development	41%	20%	1%	8%	30%
I (or my staff) improved my relationship with my families (e.g. newsletter)	42%	25%	2%	4%	28%
My approach to classroom/environment organization has changed	29%	28%	2%	14%	28%
I (or my staff) joined Develop for the first time (and received a Career Lattice Step)	41%	26%	3%	4%	26%
I (or my staff) started making lesson plans	49%	24%	0%	3%	25%
I (or my staff) joined a professional association or became more active in a child care provider association	43%	32%	4%	3%	18%

Fully-Rated Providers

Table B 7. Fully-rated providers' experiences with Parent Aware implementation

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I know what is expected of me in Parent Aware	13%	13%	74%	8%	13%	78%	10%	11%	79%
I would recommend that other programs join Parent Aware	15%	12%	73%	6%	17%	77%	9%	21%	70%
My experience with Parent Aware has been what I expected	20%	12%	68%	12%	21%	67%	15%	15%	70%
The Parent Aware Orientation Session was helpful	10%	14%	76%	12%	32%	56%	11%	30%	59%
We have made changes to our program as a result of joining Parent Aware	-	-	-	4%	7%	89%	7%	13%	80%
Parent Aware has been beneficial to my program	-	-	-	5%	13%	82%	9%	12%	79%
I am able to find the professional development trainings I need	23%	3%	75%	14%	11%	75%	15%	12%	73%
I believe my program is of higher quality because we joined Parent Aware	-	-	-	5%	17%	78%	11%	17%	72%
I learned a lot about the quality of my environment/classroom completing the Environment Self-Assessment Tool	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%	19%	72%

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My experience with the Professional Development Registry has been positive	34%	17%	49%	17%	17%	67%	-	-	-
My experience with tracking my education and training in Develop has been positive	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%	16%	70%
I believe the Environment Self-Assessment Tool accurately captures the quality of my environment/classroom	-	-	-	-	-	-	12%	23%	64%
The Parent Aware application process was easy	-	-	-	26%	21%	53%	24%	14%	62%
Teachers are able to find the professional development trainings they need	-	-	-	17%	17%	66%	13%	26%	61%
My county licenser is familiar with Parent Aware	-	-	-	-	-	-	8%	36%	56%
I have talked to my county licenser about Parent Aware	-	-	-	-	-	-	20%	34%	46%
My Food Program Advisor encourages participation in Parent Aware	-	-	-	-	-	-	22%	52%	26%

Table B 8. Fully-rated providers' opinions about marketing strategies

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
We tell families in our program about Parent Aware	5%	7%	88%	5%	8%	87%	4%	8%	87%
Parent Aware has been beneficial to the families we serve	13%	13%	74%	15%	17%	68%	11%	26%	63%
Families are more likely to choose our program because we joined Parent Aware	24%	19%	57%	25%	21%	54%	20%	29%	50%
When choosing child care for their child, parents should consider a program's quality	-	-	-	2%	0%	98%	1%	6%	93%
We display the marketing materials given to us by Parent Aware	-	-	-	10%	9%	81%	17%	10%	73%
Parent Aware Ratings are useful to early care and education programs	-	-	-	12%	13%	75%	10%	19%	71%
When choosing child care for their child, parent's should consider a program's Parent Aware Rating	-	-	-	12%	17%	71%	13%	19%	68%
Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents	-	-	-	9%	19%	72%	13.3%	20.3%	66.3%

Table B 9. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the primary purpose of Parent Aware

	2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to help early care and education programs improve their quality	4%	7%	89%	5%	9%	86%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to rate the quality of early care and education programs	6%	23%	71%	10%	18%	72%
The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to share information with parents about the quality of early care and education programs	1%	29%	70%	10%	24%	66%

Table B 10. Fully-rated providers' experience with their Quality Coach

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My Quality Coach has helped me to understand the Parent Aware requirements	3%	13%	85%	7%	10%	83%	7%	8%	85%
The time my Quality Coach has to work with me is sufficient	10%	10%	80%	12%	7%	81%	12%	15%	73%
My Professional Development Advisor (PDA) has helped me to understand the Parent Aware requirements	8%	23%	70%	8%	30%	62%	13%	26%	61%

Table B 11. Fully-rated providers indicating their #1 ranked reason for enrolling in Parent Aware¹⁷

	2013	2014	2015
It is important for my professional development/professionalism	17% (n=7/41)	30% (n=25/83)	47% (n=51/109)
Access to Early Learning Scholarships	-	6% (n=5/83)	35% (n=34/97)
Access to post-rating support dollars	-	6% (n=5/83)	33% (n=46/140)
Access to free or low-cost training	-	7% (n=6/83)	25% (n=25/100)
Access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates	-	4% (n=3/83)	19% (n=12/63)
Access to quality improvements (coaching, money)	29% (n=12/41)	-	-
Access to pre-rating support dollars	-	13% (n=11/83)	18% (n=19/104)
I joined Parent Aware for another reason not listed	7% (n=3/41)	6% (n=2/33)	17% (n=11/64)
To better attract families to my program	10% (n=4/41)	11% (n=9/83)	15% (n=13/84)
To be a part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative/program	32% (n=13/41)	16% (n=13/83)	15% (n=12/80)
Access to quality coaching	-	-	13% (n=7/53)

¹⁷ It should be noted that the online survey collector used to administer the survey in 2013, 2014, and 2015 remained the same. However, researchers noted that in 2015, the format of the question varied slightly from a respondent/user perspective. In 2015, respondents were asked to drag reasons into a ranked order. The denominator for each reason reflects the number of respondents who actively ranked that item anywhere in their list of reasons for joining Parent Aware.

My peers and colleague are participating in Parent Aware	-	-	10% (n=5/50)
If someone else in my program required me to join	5% (n=2/41)	5% (n=4/83)	4% (n=2/53)
Access to CLASS coaching	-	-	0

Table B 12. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of most helpful supports offered by Parent Aware¹⁸

	Extremely helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not used
Post-rating support dollars	71%	7%	1%	21%
My Quality Coach	67.7%	22.7%	6.8%	2.8
Pre-rating support dollars	65%	10%	1%	24%
Free or low-cost training	54%	22%	6%	18%
Access to Early Learning Scholarships	33.3%	21%	8.2%	37.4%
The Parent Aware website	26%	42%	20%	12%
Access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates	25%	17%	8%	50%
Parent Aware publicity and marketing materials	17%	40%	30%	13%
The Feedback Report from the CLASS observations	10%	9%	2%	79%
My CLASS Coach	10%	3%	3%	84%
Inclusion Coaching (from the Center for Inclusive Child Care)	9%	6%	4%	81%
Business Consultation (from First Children's Finance)	7%	6%	3%	84%
Translation and interpretation services	3%	2%	2%	93%
Child Care Health Consultation (available only in Transformation Zones)	2.4%	2.4%	3.2%	92%

¹⁸ Fully-rated providers were asked to rank the supports in the 2014 survey. Due to the differences in how the data were collected, the percentages are not presented alongside the 2015 data. Please refer to the 2014 Provider Perceptions Report for 2014 findings.

Table B 13. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 category of where post-rating dollars will be spent

	2013	2014	2015
Supplies, games, books, materials for the classroom	53%	59%	69%
Staff training, education, professional development	60%	33%	48%
Curriculum tools	27%	28%	47%
Equipment for outside	40%	27%	37%
Assessment tools	13%	22%	29%
Materials to improve the health and safety	20%	10%	15%
Renovations to the building of physical space	33%	9%	14%
Materials specifically for children with special needs	13%	9%	7%

Table B 14. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 most important quality improvement made

	2013	2014	2015
Assessment tools	-	23%	32%
Curriculum tools/lesson planning	-	20%	29%
Observational tools	-	-	16%
Renovations to the building or physical space	-	3%	9%
Staff training and/or education, staff professional development	-	35%	6%
Increase communication and interactions with parents	-	2%	6%
Changing teaching style	-	-	3%

Table B 15. Fully-rated providers' direct changes made as a result of participating

	2015		
	No	Don't Know	Yes
I purchased additional supplies, games, books, or materials for my program	13%	2%	85%
I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness	14%	5%	81%
I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children's lives	19%	3%	77%
I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children's learning	20%	5%	75%
I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field	19%	6%	75%
I changed the daily routine of my program	50%	-	50%
I added or improved outdoor play equipment	54%	2%	44%
Our program made changes to the building or physical space	66%	-	34%
I added an enrichment program for children to my program (e.g. art)	75%	1%	24%
I purchased materials specifically for children with special needs	77%	-	22%
I charge higher rates	80%	2%	18%
I serve more children who receive county child care assistance	82%	3%	15%
I increased my or my staff's wages	87%	3%	10%
I changed the food served in my program	90%	1%	9%
I decided to pursue NAEYC or another national accreditation	88%	3%	9%
I (or my staff) participated in Inclusion Coaching through the Center for Inclusive Child Care	89%	3%	8%

	2015		
	No	Don't Know	Yes
I serve more children with special needs	89%	3%	8%
I (or my staff) participated in business coaching through First Children's Finance	90%	2%	8%
I serve more children who speak a language other than English	91%	2%	7%
I extended my program's hours of operation	94%	1%	5%
Our program has opened a new classroom (for child care centers only)	94%	4%	2%

Table B 16. Degree to which fully-rated providers reported making changes as a direct result of Parent Aware

	2015				
	N/A	No	Not Yet	Partially	Yes
I (or my staff) joined Develop for the first time (and received a Career Lattice Step)	17%	8%	3%	9%	63%
I (or my staff) took more hours of training than in previous years	15%	10%	1%	11%	62%
I (or my staff) started observing and documenting children's development	9%	7%	5%	27%	52%
I (or my staff) started making lesson plans	16%	12%	4%	21%	47%
I (or my staff) started using a curriculum	17%	9%	6%	21%	47%
I (or my staff) started measuring children's progress with a child assessment tool	9%	7%	13%	26%	45%
I (or my staff) started sharing children's assessment results with parents	13%	8%	14%	21%	43%
I (or my staff) started using children's assessment results to guide	12%	8%	15%	25%	40%

	2015				
	N/A	No	Not Yet	Partially	Yes
individualized or group instruction					
I (or my staff) improved my relationship with my families (e.g. newsletter)	19%	14%	8%	21%	38%
My approach to classroom/environment organization has changed	8%	14%	3%	39%	35%
I changed our program's approach to professional development.	12%	19%	4%	30%	35%
I (or my staff) joined a professional association or became more active in a child care provider association	20%	28%	14%	12%	26%

Table B 17. Fully-rated providers' perceptions of the rating process

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I knew what I needed to do in order to get the rating I wanted	14%	14%	73%	10%	12%	78%	7%	10%	83%
The due dates within Parent Aware give me enough time to complete the necessary paperwork	44%	2%	54%	16%	13%	71%	9%	12%	79%
The rating I received was fair	14%	9%	77%	3%	16%	81%	9%	12%	79%
I plan to apply for a Parent Aware Rating in the future when my rating is set to expire	4%	9%	86%	7%	17%	76%	8%	20%	72%
The rating my program received accurately reflects my program's quality	19%	19%	62%	18%	12%	70%	24%	8%	68%
The Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) was easy to complete	32%	9%	59%	36%	18%	46%	24%	14%	62%
The Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) was sensitive to groups of different cultural backgrounds	14%	32%	55%	4%	55%	41%	3%	48%	49%
I have recommendations about how the rating process could be improved in the future.	10%	38%	52%	10%	49%	41%	8%	45%	47%

Table B 18. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 activity worked on most frequently with a Quality Coach

	2013	2014	2015
She helped me assemble the Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) for my rating	-	77% (n=72/94)	69% (n=154/222)
She helped me/my program get on Develop, formerly known as MNCPD's Registry	-	2% (n=2/91)	11% (n=18/165)
She helped me pick out new materials or equipment for my programs	-	3% (n=3/88)	10% (n=13/135)
She helped me improve my program's health and safety practices	-	-	7% (n=7/107)
She helped my program get a curriculum in place	-	0	6% (n=7/119)
She helped us with the Environment Self-Assessment Tool	-	-	6% (n=10/160)
I/My program did not work on anything with my Quality Coach	-	1% (n=1/89)	6% (n=7/115)
She helped me with lesson planning	-	-	5% (n=6/121)
She conducted authentic observations in my program	-	-	5% (n=6/119)
She helped us improve the quality of interactions I have with children	-	-	4% (n=5/120)
She helped my program get an assessment tool in place	-	3% (n=3/88)	2% (n=3/128)
Other	-	-	3% (n=3/109)
She helped my program get my families more involved	-	1% (n=1/90)	1% (n=1/106)

Table B 19. Fully-rated providers' indicating the #1 activity most worked on with a CLASS Coach

	2013	2014	2015
She observed me in the classroom and provided feedback	-	37% (n=7/19)	65% (n=17/26)
She helped me understand the content of the CLASS tools	-	21% (n=4/19)	23% (n=5/22)
I/my program did not work on anything with my CLASS coach	-	4% (n=3/19)	22% (n=2/9)
She helped me organize my classroom processes to aid children's learning	-	0	20% (n=2/10)
I watched videos of other teachers teaching	-	0	17% (n=2/12)
We videotaped me teaching in the classroom and watched videos together to reflect on ideas for improvement	-	11% (n=2/19)	14% (n=1/17)
She helped me understand how the CLASS is scored	-	5% (n=1/19)	6% (n=1/17)
She modeled best teaching practices for me	-	0	0
We discussed ways to support children emotionally	-	11% (n=2/19)	0
We discussed how to support children's cognitive and language development	-	0	0

Non-Rated Programs

Table B 20. Non-rated providers' level of knowledge about Parent Aware

	2013	2014	2015
A Lot	21%	23%	28%
A Little	44%	56%	43%
Not Very Much	25%	18%	25%
Don't Know	6%	3%	1%

Table B 21. How non-rated providers first heard of Parent Aware

	2013	2014	2015
Child Care Aware	-	41%	30%
At a training	-	16%	21%
Print advertisement	-	13%	15%
From another ECE provider	-	11%	12%
From my county licensor	-	7%	7%
Other	-	5%	6%
On the radio	-	4%	5%
Internet advertisement	-	-	2%
Internet search	-	-	1%
From a consultant/coach at my program	-	-	1%
From a parent	-	-	1%
An accreditation body	-	-	0
When I heard about scholarships that families can use at Parent Aware rated programs	-	1%	0

Table B 22. Would you consider joining Parent Aware?

	2013	2014	2015
Yes	22%	19%	26%
No	33%	40%	42%
Don't Know	45%	41%	32%

Table B 23. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision to join Parent Aware¹⁹

	2013	2014	2015
To access to free or low-cost training	-	52%	47%
It is important for my professional development/professionalism	30%	23%	29%
To access higher CCAP reimbursement rates	-	17%	12%
To better attract families to my program	34%	17%	32%
To access pre-rating support dollars	-	13%	14%
To be part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative/program	28%	13%	7%
If someone else in my organization required my program to participate	28%	13%	22%
To access coaching supports in my program	-	13%	2%
I'd join Parent Aware for another reason not listed	-	13%	12%
To access Early Learning Scholarships	-	10%	15%
To access post-rating support dollars	-	8%	12%
To access CLASS coaching	-	2%	1%
To access quality improvements (coaching, money)	30%	-	-
To access scholarship money	31%	-	-

¹⁹ Providers were asked to choose two reasons, though some selected more. Findings do not add up to 100% because providers could choose more than one reason.

Table B 24. Top reasons affecting non-rated providers' decision NOT to join Parent Aware²⁰

	2013	2014	2015
I don't need it to attract families to my program	59%	62%	61%
I don't trust that Parent Aware rating will accurately reflect my program's quality	39%	39%	32%
It is not worth the investment of my time	38%	28%	33%
I am waiting to hear from other programs/providers about their experience first	17%	16%	16%
I don't believe early care and education programs should be rated	-	15%	25%
I don't need to improve the quality of my program	12%	13%	6%
The application/rating process is difficult	16%	11%	19%
There is not enough financial incentive to join	11%	11%	12%
Parent Aware does not provide enough support for programs/providers	3%	5%	6%

²⁰ Providers were asked to choose two reasons, though some selected more. Findings do not add up to 100% because providers could choose more than one reason.

Table B 25. Non-rated provider’s perceptions of quality and Parent Aware

	2013			2014			2015		
	Disagree	Don’t Know	Agree	Disagree	Don’t Know	Agree	Disagree	Don’t Know	Agree
When choosing child care, parents should consider a program’s quality	4%	2%	94%	8%	2%	90%	5%	2%	93%
When choosing child care, parents should consider a program’s Parent Aware rating	58%	12%	30%	62%	20%	18%	66%	9%	25%
Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents	41%	27%	32%	44%	23%	33%	45%	24%	30%
Parent Aware ratings are useful to early care and education programs	36%	25%	39%	44%	23%	33%	42%	18%	39%

Table B 26. Non-rated providers’ use of a curriculum

	2015
My program uses a formal written curriculum	37%
Most used curricula:	
My program uses a locally developed curriculum	28%
Creative Curriculum for Preschool	15%

Table B 27. Non-rated providers' use of a child development assessment tool

	2015
My program routinely and formally tracks the development or progress of children	59%
Most used assessment tool:	
Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Developmental Continuum Assessment Tool	21%
Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos: Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit	14%