



## Child Care Professionals Focus Group Results: Indiana



### Teacher vs. Provider



Participants preferred the terms “teacher” and “administrator” to reflect the specific job within a child care setting. The word “provider” was felt to reflect family child care more than center-based caregivers/teachers. As this messaging is intended to reach those working directly with children, we will use the term teacher.

“I think that word “provider” is what’s tripping us up because provider can mean several different things versus, I think provider versus a teacher versus the administrator. So if this statement is blanketed at everyone, sometimes that word provider is a little different. Well, I’m not the provider, I’m the teacher or I’m the administrator. So I think that is the word that is maybe causing some of the hesitation to say that [these messages work] for everybody.”



### Nutrition



Overall, the group agreed with the message pertaining to nutrition. Participants really resonated with the element of being influencers to children’s nutritional lifelong foundation.

The group pointed out that the level of influence differs based on the type of child care setting. Family child care providers have a greater level of influence than teachers in centers. In the latter, cooks and center directors have a role in setting menus and purchasing foods.

“In my experience, pointing out to providers that you have this huge influence because you’re with [the children] more of their waking hours than their parents are, you do have a responsibility for most things.”



## Active Play



The group agreed with the logic behind the active play message. However, participants had reservations about the message itself based on the term “active play.” They felt that messages should be specific about what types of play opportunities we are discussing (i.e., indoors, outdoors, or both), and suggested we provide a definition for active play.

The group also felt that it was important that messages promote both structured activities and unstructured activities for children so that teachers and providers know that they have a role in leading activities that get kids moving.

“It may not be something that they can get at home, like you said. I mean, there’s some of my kids, I know they live in an apartment; they don’t have a yard. So my center may be the only place where active play can really happen.”

“Well, benefits are we’ve shown that is how children learn. That’s the best way for them to be able to learn is just being able to be active while they’re learning.”

“I also think that active play helps children learn to focus. It helps them physiologically.”



## Screen Time



Respondents felt that children get too much time with screens and they did not respond favorably to the message that some screen time is good. Respondents expressed concern with the ambiguity of the term “some” in our screen time message. They suggested that some teachers might struggle to appropriately interpret what “some” screen time means, and encouraged us to add specific time limits to this message. The group recommended that the message also specify what kind of screen time is being discussed—whether computers, tablets, or TV—because some teachers incorporate computer time as part of lessons.

While the initial response to the “some screen time is good” statement was negative, there was consensus that technology use in child care settings can be used well for educational purposes. The group stated that if screens are used, content should be limited to approved, educational shows. Shows have to be short, family friendly and seen as a treat rather than a routine part of the classroom day. The respondents feel that having guided screen time or guided interactions with TV or tablets as part of the learning experience is important for child care settings.

There was support among the group for screen time limits of 30 minutes per week for all types of screen time.

“[Providers] need to understand that children will have plenty of opportunity for screen time with their parents, that standards can help teach the children the balance or what we do balances out that.”

