Digital Transformation Services Project

Uplifting childcare providers in digital literacy, technology, and quality

Supporting economic and workforce development
in El Paso, Texas

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www.borderplexjobs.com

Why Childcare?

Childcare is the foundation for a strong workforce, economic development, and educational advancement in a community. Without childcare, stable economic development is at risk. Armed with this fact, Workforce Solutions Borderplex innovated the Digital Transformation Services Project to better support local childcare providers by helping them to upskill their digital literacy knowledge and obtain helpful technology and programming to successfully run their businesses and obtain Texas Rising Star certification - the premier certification for childcare providers in the state of Texas.

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached El Paso, it forever changed the business landscape of the region, much like it did around the world. Businesses transitioned to online services - shopping, appointment setting, deliveries, and more - to accommodate social distancing and lockdown orders, but not every business was equipped to do so. Workforce Solutions Borderplex launched the Digital Transformation Services project to support local business owners in upscaling their digital literacy and obtaining the necessary equipment and programming to succeed.

As the pandemic began to wane, Workforce Solutions Borderplex saw the need to innovate the project and continue supporting local businesses, particularly local childcare organizations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the El Paso region is a hotbed for childcare businesses, which serve as a primary source of income for families throughout the city. Workforce Solutions Borderplex staff innovated the program to fit this demographic.

How it Works

🖥️ 1: Technology for Business Optimization

Through this project, digital technology consultants work with local childcare businesses in the Paso del Norte region to assess their needs, train their employees in helpful programming (including Microsoft Office and e-commerce tools), and obtain necessary technology for success, such as printers, computers, and cellphones. Consultants also connect participants with further learning opportunities, including access to LinkedIn Learning, where they can further develop their business prowess with courses in finance, human resources, and more.

Classroom & Learning Technology

Interactive Displays / Smartboards

1. Support interactive learning, storytime, and classroom engagement. *Examples: Promethean Board, SMART Board*
2. Tablets for Classrooms-Child-friendly devices for educational games, eBooks, and digital storytelling. *Examples: Amazon Fire Kids Edition, iPad with Guided Access*
3. Voice Assistants (optional, controlled use)-Assist with classroom routines, timers, music, and simple reminders. *Example: Amazon Echo with privacy controls enabled*

Software for Daily Operations

1. Brightwheel-A comprehensive platform for attendance, billing, daily reports, and parent communication.
2. Procare Solutions-Manages enrollment, payroll, staff scheduling, and reporting, all in one place.

Center Management

1. Attendance & Check-In Kiosks-Streamline sign-in/out procedures for families and improve safety tracking. *Examples: iPad kiosks with check-in apps*
2. Classroom Management Cameras-Used internally to monitor staff-child interactions and support quality assurance. *Examples: Owlet Cam, Arlo Secure (admin access only)*
3. Laptops or Desktops for Admin Staff-Necessary for managing billing, compliance, staff coordination, and documentation.

Security & Compliance Tools

1. Door Access Systems (keypad/keycard)-Restrict unauthorized entry
2. Emergency Notification Systems-Alert parents/staff in urgent situations

How it Works

2: Improved Learning Environment: Texas Rising Star Program

The Texas Rising Star program provides quality ratings and improvement systems to childcare programs in Texas. Childcare providers who are certified demonstrate a quality of work and care that not only meet regulations but go well beyond them. The Texas Rising Star program offers an entry-level certification as well as two-, three-, and four-star ratings based on the quality of services provided.

🧠 Challenges Overcome

A key barrier to innovation in many childcare centers was the lack of familiarity and comfort with technology among staff and administrators. While these centers were eager to enhance learning experiences and improve operational efficiency, many lacked experience with digital tools, software platforms, and equipment integration. This presented a significant challenge to implementing modern technology solutions.

Solution: Targeted Support and Simplified Integration

To overcome this barrier, we prioritized ease of use and hands-on support throughout the implementation process:

- **User-Friendly Tools:** We selected intuitive platforms such as Brightwheel, Learning Genie, and check-in apps that require minimal technical knowledge to operate.
- **Onboarding & Training:** Staff were provided with step-by-step training, quick-start guides, and ongoing technical support to build confidence in using the new tools.
- **Pilot Programs:** Centers were invited to participate in small-scale pilots to test equipment (like tablets and classroom cameras) in a low-pressure setting, allowing staff to become familiar with technology before full rollout.
- **Peer Learning:** We facilitated opportunities for staff from different centers to share successes and troubleshoot together, which fostered a sense of community and reduced hesitation.

Successes & Outcomes

$ Direct Investment

Since program inception, WSB has provided Digital Transformation Services to **266 local childcare providers** who serve over **8.600 children,** and invested, on average, **$3,600** in technology equipment, materials, and supplies into each childcare business.

📈 Long-Term Impact in the Community

Since initiating the project, 273 local childcare providers have taken the initiative to become certified through the Texas Rising Star program, up from 90 before implementation of the program. Fifteen childcare providers are scheduled to take their first assessment as of March 2024.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex has also observed a ripple effect in the community. By upscaling local business owners' digital literacy skills and providing greater access to supportive technology, these individuals can earn more money and increase salaries for their employees, which is then returned to the community through the support of local businesses.