



TECH GOES HOME COACH INTERVIEW REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tech Goes Home Tennessee (TGH TN) Program for Early Child Care Agencies and Educators is administered by the Enterprise Center under contract with the CCR&R Network to provide training and technical assistance to the child care workforce across the state. The program is designed to teach foundational technology and digital skills to early childhood educators. The purpose of the training is to enhance the quality of child care in Tennessee and promote career advancement for early childhood educators. The training program consists of 15 hours of hands-on classroom instruction to develop participants' technical skills and introduce professional development resources. Upon completion of the program, educators are provided with a Chromebook device to assist with program administration, budgeting, marketing, classroom instruction and resources, and parent communication. Educators are also eligible to attend 15 hours of Advanced Training.



Additionally, TGH TN Technology Coaches provide coaching to those that have completed the 15-hour training course. The coaching is individualized to meet the needs of the educator. The coaching content can range from helping individuals make up missed classes and helping individuals outside of class to aiding educators with linking their new Chromebook to the local printer. Coaching can be provided by telephone but is typically delivered in-person.

At the request of the Director for the Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCR&R), the Ochs Center staff conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with seven Enterprise Center Tech Goes Home Technology Coaches and one member of program management. These interviews took place in March 2025. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain input from coaches to evaluate and inform programmatic changes and improvements. Thematic content analysis was conducted using transcripts from the interviews. Findings from the analysis are discussed in this report.

TGH TECHNOLOGY COACHES

The Enterprise Center employs eight Technology Coaches to deliver technology training to early childhood educators across Tennessee. Each coach is responsible for recruiting



educators, teaching the 15-hour curriculum offered in three cohorts per quarter, offering 15 hours of Advanced Workshops per quarter and providing ongoing support to program graduates within their assigned region. These regions vary in size, spanning from four to 20 counties and covering all 95 of Tennessee’s counties. However, the regional divisions do not align with the CCR&R boundaries. With all coaches having been in their roles for less than 15 months, management sought feedback on:

- the onboarding process,
- the effectiveness of communication and support systems,
- and overall team well-being.

Additionally, the coaches spoke about the challenges and recommendations related to:

- recruitment,
- curriculum and class structure,
- and device delivery.

ONBOARDING FOR COACHES

The onboarding process for current coaches varied, with some completing it remotely and others traveling to Chattanooga for in-person training. Those who traveled participated in a



three-day training program. All coaches have access to an onboarding document, which includes updates to the training material. Several coaches highlighted the document’s value, noting that they continue to use it as a reference.

“We have an onboarding document, which even though I’ve been here a year, I go back and reference [it] to remind myself of anything that I might need to do, or if I need a link, or if I need updated information. That onboarding document has all of the steps of everything we do so that’s been a real help to me.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

While overall satisfaction with the onboarding process was high, a few recommendations were shared to enhance it further.



- The first recommendation is to lengthen the onboarding process. Three days may not be enough time for new coaches to learn all of the information needed to be successful in their job. As one coach said, *“There's only so much you can cram into your brain in three days.”*
- The second recommendation is to include opportunities for new coaches to interact with or shadow more experienced coaches during the onboarding process. This would allow the new coaches to ask questions and for the experienced coaches to share their “tips and tricks” for being successful.
 - *“I think that would've been a lot more helpful to kind of see how also some of the challenges, you know, what are some of the other challenges that those other tech coaches might run into pertaining to like outreach and some of those, and how do they conquer those? I think that would've been great.”*
 - *“I am more of an in-person, kind of like, I would like to see it and then have them walk me through like TAM especially because there's a lot that goes with TAM.”*
- The third recommendation is to provide more background information about the childcare industry and environment. Not all coaches have a background in early childhood education or in childcare. Those who lack this knowledge or experience would benefit from additional training about the childcare environment.
 - *“I don't think we've truly had any specific training that kind of gears someone who has never been in early childhood education to fully understand ins and outs of early childhood.”*
 - *“An important thing to probably address from the beginning for new hires especially, is how do you approach a center and what are our expectations? I mean, I was always told you don't interact with the children. That was made very clear. Now of course that's, you know, that's something that is, is very fluid. We go in there and sometimes children are trying to talk to me and stuff and of course I'm not gonna [sic] ignore them. But I do think that there could be better training on that.”*
- While this recommendation was not specific to the onboarding process, new coaches could benefit from a deeper familiarity with tools and resources included in the curriculum. For example, gaining a better understanding of TNPAL and other childcare resources and tools would enhance the classroom experience.
 - *“Like TNPAL- I don't really know anything about it and that's because, you know, I don't have an account so I can't access it. And everything that I've learned about it has been looking over the shoulders of the*

participants while I'm teaching them how to use it. ... I think it's mostly just like the childcare resources and tools that like, I don't really have access to on my own that I, that we talk about, and they'll ask me a question I'll be like, I don't know."

COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Coaches shared positive feedback about management, expressing appreciation for the strong communication and ongoing support they receive. A weekly team meeting provides an opportunity for management to share updates, for team members to discuss their progress, and to collaborate on solutions to job-related challenges. Additionally, each coach has a scheduled one-on-one meeting with management each month. Overall, communication is frequent and consistent, with most coaches finding the level of communication sufficient. Only one coach felt that weekly meetings were too frequent, suggesting that bi-weekly meetings would be sufficient.

"I think that they're (monthly one-on-one meetings) good. I think they're a good sort of like touch point for us as a team. And, um, I think it's just the right frequency for making sure that we're up to date on whatever new information we need. Yeah. I think that the weekly meetings are good. I wouldn't change them."

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings, coaches frequently "chat" with team members and management to ask questions and stay informed. All coaches agreed that they feel comfortable reaching out to management with any issues or questions that may arise.

"And we also have like our chat where we're constantly like, you know, asking questions and, and things like that."

"They [management] are on top of things. They have the meetings if you have questions. They're always asking like, do y'all have any questions of me?"

"I've never worked in a job that is so communicative. And they're very responsive to my questions. Um, uh, and yeah, very supportive."

The management team utilizes several tools to support customer development, share updates, and streamline communication. Airtable serves as an alternative to a traditional customer relationship management (CRM) system, enabling the team to build a database



of educators. This platform provides coaches with a centralized system to document notes and organize their workflow efficiently.

“It's a place where we keep notes on previous communications that we've had. And that's separate from TAM. That's something that we just do on our own, which allows us to kind of have a more in-depth customer database.”

The coaches shared positive feedback regarding communication from management about curriculum updates, agreeing that updates are provided in a timely manner. Given the rapid pace of technological advancements, staying informed and ensuring training materials remain current can be challenging. However, coaches expressed satisfaction with the existing communication systems and feel comfortable reporting any necessary updates they identify during their training sessions.

“For the most part there's really good systems there for us to submit feedback and we have really good communication and [management]'s always great at communicating and getting back to us.”

“Because technology is not stagnant and, you know, kind of needs to change. Um, but they do a good job of communicating any updates that we've had to make to our curriculum. I feel like we're on a really good path with that.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall satisfaction with the level of communication and tools used was high. However, one coach felt that efficiency could be improved by adopting a standardized template for internal documents.

- “We've got some internal documents that we use for this [tracking and keeping notes]. ... Every tech coach is kind of up to themselves to create something like this. ... I think it's very important because you want to make sure as a tech coach that you're canvassing properly and efficiently.”

TEAM MORALE

All coaches provided positive statements about the team and its members. All recognize the challenge with developing a team spirit since most work remotely and have little opportunity to talk or meet in person. However, all acknowledged a collaborative spirit and complimented the efforts made to build the team. Coaches feel comfortable seeking advice or resources from fellow coaches when support for educators is needed. Several



attributed the positive team environment to the “pep squad” who is responsible for creating team-building activities.

“We do have like our, our pep squad that, um, that they work on activities that kind of help connect us. Sometimes during meetings they'll do something like a game or ... something that helps connect us, you know, more personally. So, I think that's really helpful but it's just hard not being in an office where



you can stop by and chat with somebody.”

“We definitely have that spirit of collaboration and um, to where I've even reached out to other tech coaches. I mean, like, you know, some of my providers need help with this, could you, you know, run me through a few things?”

“I like our team a lot. I think we're very connected.”

No mention was made during the interviews about the need to improve morale or team spirit.

RECRUITMENT

Each coach is responsible for recruiting childcare educators to participate in their training courses. The recruitment process varies and is often dependent on the region and the preferences of the coach. For example, some coaches are more comfortable with face-to-face visits with providers while others prefer telephone and email communication. Also, face-to-face visits in larger regions are problematic due to the long drive times needed to reach all areas and is an inefficient use of time and resources. Despite slight differences, coaches reported using a similar recruitment process.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A DATABASE

Coaches generally begin by using information from TAM to build a database or list of childcare providers in their region. Once the list is created, records are kept that include information about when contact was made, method of contact, if and when the provider participated in the training, and other material that would be useful for future outreach

efforts. Creating and updating these notes are important to ensure that all providers are contacted and have an opportunity to take part in the training.

“I’ll take data from TAM generally focusing on one county at a time. So, I’ve got [a] big list for [urban county] where I actually break it down into zip codes. But then for other counties where [there are] maybe six to 10 centers ... copy and paste data from TAM ... it’ll have phone numbers, agency name, director name, the important information that I need. And then I’ll have a spot of course where there’s notes that I can take and I’ll make a note if I called them and I’ll make a note if they answered my phone call or if I sent them an email. So that way I can really track it. So, I wanna [sic] make sure that I’m calling all of the centers, and over time, reaching all of the centers is to the best of my ability and, and making sure that I’m not calling the same center that isn’t interested over and over and over again.”

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Coaches also shared that they do in-person visits with providers to introduce themselves and the program. During these visits, the coaches share their business cards, swag that promotes the program, and informational flyers with the educators. Making these visits alongside CCR&R coaches is optimal – especially for newer technology coaches who have yet to build a personal relationship with the providers and educators.

Another successful strategy for building relationships is to attend the Director’s meetings and other CCR&R events.

“Going to director’s meetings also help ‘cause [sic] it gets, you know, my face out there and people can link me to CRR &R instead of, you know, some random person calling or emailing ... because they don’t know me, you know, but they know the ECQC.”

REFERRALS

Another effective resource for recruitment is referrals from CCR&R coaches. CCR&R coaches can provide the names of providers who would most benefit from the technology training. However, the frequency of these referrals varies across regions.

“My best avenue of approach with that [recruitment] is actually through the CCR&R ECQCs. They have been phenomenal. My [county] ECQC, she’s constantly like in my email saying, Hey, here’s someone that I think could

benefit. They just opened up, they could use you. I've gotten two classes from her from that way."

"I'm not really getting any referrals from CCR&R. I feel like I should be getting at least some."

EMAIL BLASTS

TGH management supports coaches in their recruitment efforts by providing email blasts for notifying providers about upcoming training programs. All coaches shared that management is very responsive and support is provided when it is requested.

"I don't do it for all classes because sometimes if I got a class on a schedule where there's already 10 people signed up for it from that center, then I'm not gonna e-blast 'cause there's not much space. And I don't want to get eight applications coming in for a class that's already pretty much full now."

RECOMMENDATION TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT

Coaches did not indicate a need for systemic changes to support their recruitment efforts. Those facing challenges shared plans to adjust their strategies, including taking a more proactive approach to building relationships with CCR&R coaches. However, one recommendation was made to standardize the tracking and recording of outreach efforts. This standardization would facilitate better information sharing, particularly if regional boundaries are adjusted in the future.

CURRICULUM AND CLASS STRUCTURE

The curriculum has recently undergone well received changes. The coaches were given the opportunity to make recommendations for improvement during the process and many of their recommendations were implemented.

"I like where it's at right now. I really do. I think that . . . we made a bit of changes to it here over the new year. They [administrators] had asked for feedback from us on what we think we should change, and we were able to submit that to [them]. And then [administrator] went in and made some changes to the curriculum."



“I actually really love the curriculum. I think that it's engaging. I think that it's easy to follow.”

Coaches reported they have enough autonomy to arrange the training schedule to best meet the needs of the educators. Most agreed that teaching at least one class per week was optimal for learning. Few challenges for teaching the curriculum were discussed. However, one challenge discussed was accommodating a wide range of technology skills among educators enrolled in the training. Creating an environment that is engaging for those who have more experience while being sensitive to those who have very little computer experience requires patience, and a unique skill set.

“Now, it's very challenging when you've got a class of 10 educators. One of them doesn't know how to use a computer and the other nine, well they're pretty confident. They're there to learn. They, they wanna [sic] learn stuff and they, and they can keep up with the pace of the class and they can ask more advanced questions.”

A second challenge discussed was finding an accessible location to host the training. This is particularly challenging for coaches in rural areas and in larger districts.

“Getting hosting sites has been one of the complications I have. A lot of people have interests, but they don't really have a hosting location to teach that size of a class. I mean, thankfully, I've had some pretty good luck with getting some of the churches locally to help, but that has its limitations.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Two recommendations were made to further enhance the curriculum and teaching experience.

- Week 1's content is “light” and would benefit from additional and updated material.
 - *“Session one is always difficult for me to fill the time.”*
 - *“The first session I think needs some updates.”*
- Adding more discussions about AI to the curriculum would enhance the learning experience for the educators.
 - *“I would like to see us talk more in our main curriculum about AI ... Educators want to know about it, they want to learn about it, they don't understand it and that leads to a lot of fear around it. But it's a really powerful tool that educators can be using in the center.”*

DEVICE DELIVERY

In addition to recruiting, scheduling, and teaching the training courses, coaches are also responsible for documenting and delivering the Chromebooks to educators who have completed the training. This process has engendered challenges in the past but recent changes have greatly improved the experience. Coaches shared that management communicates effectively and they are alerted when the devices will be delivered so that arrangements can be made to be home when the devices are delivered.

No recommendations were made for improving the process.

CONCLUSION

The Tech Goes Home Tennessee (TGH TN) Program is committed to equipping early childhood educators with essential digital skills to enhance child care quality and professional development. The Enterprise Center employs eight Technology Coaches to implement the TGH TN program in all Tennessee counties. The coaches serve regions that range in size from four to 20 counties. The coaching team is “young” – no coach has been in their position for more than 15 months.



Despite being a relatively new team with remote assignments, the coaches report a strong sense of collaboration and team spirit. They attribute the strong sense of belonging to regular team meetings, one on one meetings with management, and constant communication with management and other coaches. All shared a high level of comfort in regard to asking questions and offering recommendations for

improvements to the curriculum.

In addition to personnel changes, the curriculum has undergone recent changes. The changes have been well received, and few additional changes were recommended. Moreover, the coaches have the necessary autonomy to develop training schedules that best meet the needs of the educators in their region. Overall, the TGH TN management has created the environment and provided the resources needed for the technology coaches to successfully fulfill the mission of the program.

