

Organizational Structure of ECE can Influence Implementation of Responsive Feeding



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Background

Responsive feeding (RF).

- Evidence-based practice (EBP) that promotes healthy eating, autonomy and self-regulation in children in early care and education (ECE).¹⁻⁴
- Implementation in ECE is low, especially in rural family childcare homes (FCCH) settings.⁵

Literature Gap

- Little is known about rural FCCH providers' perception regarding implementation of RF EBPs



Figure 1. RF in a childcare center

Research Objective

Determine FCCH providers' perspectives for implementing RF EBPs using the Diffusion of Innovations theory.⁶

Methods

Maximum variation purposive sampling

- Rurality and RF implementation

Focus group interviews

- 6 interviews with 19 rural FCCH providers.

Interview protocol

- Applied the Diffusion of Innovations theory⁷⁻⁹

Data analysis

- Thematic analysis¹⁰

Results

- All participants were female (n=19) and 95% identified as white.
- Mean age of 40.3 ± 8.1 years and mean of 14.5 ± 8.4 years of experience

Results Table 1. Roger's Diffusion of Innovations theory - Innovation-Decision Process constructs, corresponding interview questions, and themes

Construct	Example Questions	Themes
Knowledge	How familiar are you with using these practices?	FCCH providers familiar with RF EBPs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child and Adult Care Food Program Nebraska Go NAP SACC Step Up to Quality
Persuasion and Decision	What motivated you to begin using this practice?	<p><i>Motivators to begin RF EBPs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire to do what was best for the children. Encouragement from other providers <p><i>Perceived challenges for adoption of RF EBPs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infants and older children together at mealtimes increased stress for both adults and children Providers performing multiple roles during mealtimes Lack of space for the provider to sit with children and role model Concern about children making messes in the FCCH provider's home.
Implementation	<p>What, if any, difficulties did you have when you began this practice?</p> <p>What were some strategies used to overcome these challenges?</p>	<p><i>Perceived implementation challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple tasks during mealtime Caring for infants' needs while older children were eating. <p><i>Strategies to implement responsive feeding practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat infants near the table during mealtime Start slowly when allowing children to serve themselves Older children act as peer models and help younger children during the meal
Confirmation	What do you think would help you or others to successfully use these practices over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support children's healthful development Support a positive mealtime environment Saves time and reduced food waste during mealtimes

Conclusions

- Results indicated that organizational structure impacts successful implementation of responsive feeding EBPs in ECE programs.
- Programming and policy efforts should consider organizational factors when targeting children's healthful dietary needs.



Figure 2. Mealtime in FCCH

Next Steps



Conduct a randomized control trial to evaluate EAT Family Style in FCCH for:

- Improvement in FCCH providers' implementation of RF EBPs
- Improvement in children's dietary intake

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