

A Changing Workforce: The Transitions of Rural Home-Based Childcare Providers' Work Roles and Professional Goals

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There is a great need for affordable and high-quality childcare. To ensure safe and stimulating environments for young children, policymakers have called for unified standards across childcare professions. However, many childcare providers enter the profession under varying circumstances and with different intentions, particularly home-based providers. Additionally, these providers are the most likely to serve rural communities and children living in poverty. Changes to federal and state mandates to require participation in licensure and certification programs may be unwelcome among those who do not want to go through the formalization process, and they may lose benefits, vouchers, and governmental programming. Using data from a national survey of home-based childcare providers and in-depth interviews with providers in two areas of Pennsylvania, this mixed methods study will identify the motivations and barriers associated with the decision of home-based childcare providers to transition to more formal professional roles. With this understanding, future outreach programs and standardization measures can best fit the needs of the care providers and the children in their care.