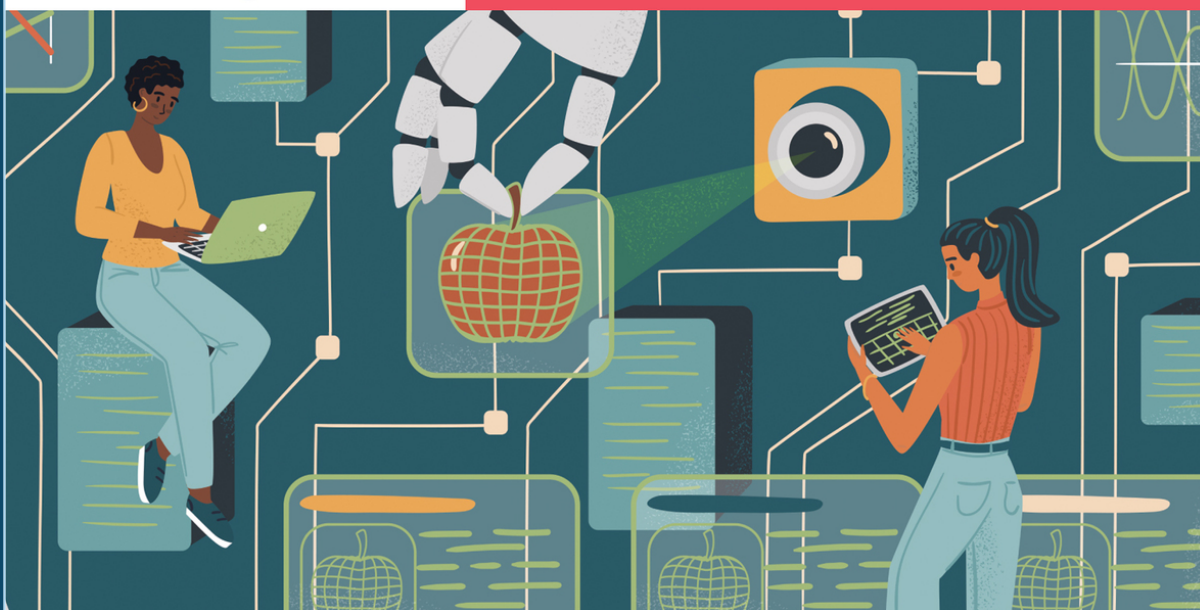




Opportunities
Exchange

voices

Newsletter | Vol. 6 | No. 1



Think In-Home Family Child Care Programs Don't Use Tech? Think Again.

By Mia Pritts, [Opportunities Exchange](#), and Erica Phillips, [National Association for Family Child Care](#)

When it comes to family child care programs, outdated stereotypes are holding the entire field back. Too often, assumptions are made that these programs operate informally, that their owners lack advanced education or business skills, and that they are resistant to modern tools and technology. But these misconceptions couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, family child care operators are active participants in their own success. They continuously seek opportunities to enhance their practices and embrace tools that improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Statewide partnerships promoting technology use and self-reported business practices reveal that family child care operators are adaptable and innovative professionals. **Embracing digital solutions isn't just about saving time; it's about empowering educators.**

The recent National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) [annual survey](#) gathered 700 responses, offering a glimpse into the business practices and lived experiences of home-based FCC educators. **A striking takeaway from this survey was that 81% of respondents reported using technology tools to run their businesses.** Technology used by family child care operators include: Child Care Management Software (CCMS); technology designed to support compliance, tracking and reporting for Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsors; technology that supports electronic tuition collection from parents; online banking apps; and, accounting software. This finding makes sense given the real-world challenges of FCC educators. Noting a diaper change on a cell phone with one hand is easier than finding paper and pen and thinking about the date, time and other details needed to document the event. Given that FCC educators are typically multi-tasking: holding an infant while singing, engaging with a toddler, preparing a snack or meal and more, the power of modern technology to transform their work is significant.

NAFCC survey responses underscore that family child care educators are not only willing to use technology but ready to explore additional ways to leverage automation for administrative efficiency, enhanced communication with families, improved record-keeping, and more. Educator interest in technology aligns with the power currently available in a multitude of off-the-shelf products and new strategies that states are using to link data systems together for user ease and greater data reliability.

For instance, modern technology can help home-based educators manage time-consuming tasks like compliance with licensing, quality rating, and professional development systems. Family child care educators may choose not to participate in quality improvement efforts because the paperwork burden is just too much. However, **a growing number of states have begun to allow child care owners and operators to maintain electronic records** (vs requiring hard-copy documents on site) including documents related to the children and families they serve (such as enrollment forms, attendance documentation, health records, and so forth), staff they employ, required assessments or facility inspections, and more. This electronic recordkeeping is achieved through the use of child care management software (CCMS).

Enabling electronic documents may also remove language as an accessibility barrier, since most technology platforms offer translation options for their tools as well as technical assistance and support options in multiple languages. Additionally, harnessing the power of technology makes it easier for home-based educators to engage in activities such as professional learning, networking and advocacy at higher rates since they can participate in their limited free time and without physically leaving their program. We know that

higher credentials, degrees and quality levels can help providers participate in additional public funding programs, potentially secure tiered quality add-ons for public subsidy, and charge higher rates of private pay tuition. In this way, technology can positively impact a provider's bottom line.

When we let go of the myth that family child care educators can't or won't use technology, we unlock new possibilities for the field. Embracing digital solutions isn't just about saving time; it's about empowering educators, supporting families, and enabling policymakers to make informed decisions. Processing paper is a thing of the past—it's time to move forward together.

In today's fast-paced world, embracing technology is crucial for the growth and success of family child care programs. By integrating digital tools, educators can streamline administrative tasks, significantly reducing time spent on paperwork. This efficiency not only allows busy FCC professionals to focus more on delivering high-quality care and education but also offers families greater convenience and transparency. Moreover, adopting technology enables the collection of consistent, accurate and meaningful data, which is invaluable for stakeholders and policymakers.

Without question, technology has the capacity to empower FCC educators. However, not all educators can easily access modern technology. **Success hinges on making sure that all family child care educators can afford a CCMS and know how to use it, have access to the hardware (computers, tablets, smartphones) required to use modern technology and have fast and reliable internet.**

When we perpetuate the myth that family child care educators can't or won't use technology, we limit the sector's potential for growth and improvement. It's time to challenge this misconception and recognize that processing paper is outdated—not just for FCC programs but also for regulatory agencies. When we embrace digital solutions, we empower educators, enhance operational efficiency, and contribute to a more responsive and informed early childhood education system.

Evolving with Intention: Angelique's Path from Paper to Personalized Tech

Case study: Ms. P's Child and Family Services, Washington, D.C.

Over her 28 years as a family child care operator, Angelique Marshall has seen technology reshape how early educators connect with families, track children's development, and run their businesses. Her approach to technology has always

been intentional—not driven by trends, but by the needs of her program and the families she supports.

She began her business with traditional, paper-based systems. “It worked for a long time,” she reflected, “but as families’ lives changed, I had to adapt too.” Her first steps into digital tools wasn’t with management platforms, but rather with things like text messages and mobile payment apps. As families started using a range of systems—think Chime, Cash App, Zelle, Apple Pay, and others—Angelique downloaded each one. “I didn’t want to download all these different tools,” she admitted, “but doing so allowed me to meet families where they were.”

As her comfort with digital tools grew, so did her use of more comprehensive platforms. She adopted systems like Procare and KidKare for recordkeeping and compliance tracking, communication, and daily operations, and other tools for accounting and bookkeeping. Even when her local government encouraged or required certain technology tools, she made sure she understood how they worked and what they could—or couldn’t—do for her unique program.

Angelique is clear that she knows the leap into technology can take time, but that learning how to use these tools is critical for her own success and the success of her program. For parents hesitant to engage with new tools, she sends personalized texts with links to her app-based newsletter. “I want to show families how easy it is to access things in this new way, so I give them a direct pathway to learn. We always have a phone in our hand,” she says. “So let’s use it in a way that works for all of us.”

For Angelique, adopting technology isn’t about chasing innovation for its own sake. It’s about keeping pace with the world—while holding tight to the relationships, values, and insights that make family child care so unique. Her journey highlights how technology adoption in family child care often starts small—with a payment app or a digital form—and grows into something more meaningful when it’s guided by the real, everyday needs of families and educators.

Family child care, often referred to as home-based child care, provides a critical option for children and families in a program operated in a residential setting.

[Web Version](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®