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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation was prepared for Early Learning Ventures by the Quality Research and Consulting Group. We would like to thank the following ELV program staff and contractors who generously contributed their time to answer questions, conceptualize field surveys, and review drafts of the report.

Judy Williams
Executive Director

Timothy García
Child Care Partnerships Director

Ty Johnson
Early Education Manager

Elsa Sackett Warren
Leadership Development Manager

Jennifer García Rosendo
Family Engagement Manager

Tristan Clerihew
Client Support and Product Manager

Michael Taylor
Membership Development Manager

Karen Melott
Child Care Partnership Coordinator
Mesa County

Veronica Ibarra
Child Care Partnership Coordinator
Pueblo County

Brooke Shellhorn
Grant and Development Specialist

Barbara Wacker
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Casey Myers
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Colleen Roahrig
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Jennifer Walters
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Kimberly Martinez
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Krisshetta Thobani
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Lora Rohlman
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Michele Zon
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Sue Kansteiner
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Vicki Maestas
Child Care Partnership Specialist

Bryan Shannon
Contractor

Alisha Mullins
Contractor

This report would not have been possible without the participation of the following Early Head Start program partners who contributed their program’s data and whose administrators completed field surveys. We appreciate your contributions immensely.

Aunt Patty’s Childcare
Caring Kids Preschool
Children’s Chalet
Children’s Palace Learning Center
Country Care
Country Kids
Cribs2Crayons
Dana Shepple
DeeDee Overton
Donna Araujo
Early Learning Center at New Legacy
Erica’s Home Daycare
Faith Lutheran Child Care
Fuller Child Care
Jennifer’s Child Care
Kids Castle
Kinderkirk Preschool
Landmark Christian Preschool
Learning Tree
Life Center Academy
Lil Kurtain Klimbers

Lil Peaches
Little Blossoms Early Learning Center
Little Boots Early Learning Center
Little Imaginations FCCH
Little Imaginations Early Learning Center
Nurtured Journey Preschool
R5 HS Young Parent Program
Rising Star Early Learning Center
Sarah Neal
Shailee’s Sunbeams
Sips and Giggles
Southside Children’s Center 1
Southside Children’s Center 2
Spark of Imagination Child Care
Step by Step Child Development Center
The Baby Haven
We-Kare-A-Lot Preschool
Wishes and Dreams
Yampah Mountain Children’s Center
Yolanda Gonzales
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Learning Ventures (ELV) is a Colorado-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to expanding access to high-quality, affordable child care for young children. A primary focus of ELV has been the development of a cloud-based child care management system called Alliance CORE. The goal of Alliance CORE is to streamline the administrative processes of child care programs. The system was built from the ground-up, taking into account child care licensing requirements and feedback from early childhood programs to ensure the system was relevant and useful for programs.

After several years of supporting programs in using Alliance CORE, ELV partnered with Quality Consulting and Research Group (QCRG) to gain a better understanding of administrators’ usage and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE. Together, ELV and QCRG developed the Alliance CORE Usage Survey. Administrators from 36 ELV Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) programs completed the survey. The evaluation aims and key results are outlined below.

Aim 1: To understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE over time

All programs reported feeling at least somewhat knowledgeable in how to use Alliance CORE, and 63.9% of programs reported feeling very or extremely knowledgeable. Additionally, the majority of the programs (91.7%) reported an increase in their use of Alliance CORE.

Aim 2: To understand the extent to which programs perceive Alliance CORE to be beneficial

All participating programs (100%) reported that using Alliance CORE saved their programs time, energy, and effort to some extent. The three most highly reported benefits were:

1. having a centralized system for entering and tracking data that saves time,
2. the ability to maintain updated contact information about families, and
3. an easier and quicker process for submitting reimbursement requests to state systems that are based on child attendance data.
Using Alliance CORE to streamline programs’ administrative processes has brought numerous benefits to ELV EHS-CCP programs. Administrators reported that they use Alliance CORE frequently and that it has been highly useful. Alliance CORE has enabled programs to efficiently capture and monitor important program data that supports their quality improvement efforts. Taken together, these findings suggest that use of Alliance CORE may enable administrators to focus more time and effort on improving program quality and supporting teachers in improving the quality of the interactions that children experience. In turn, children may benefit in their social emotional development, behavior regulation, cognitive development, and language skills. The results from this evaluation provide evidence for the effectiveness of ELV supports (i.e., Alliance CORE) in enabling programs to better serve children and their families.

Aim 3: To understand programs’ frequency of use, method of updating, and usefulness of Alliance CORE features

Alliance CORE features that track and monitor information about children were among the most frequently used and most useful features. These features allow program staff to efficiently update important information about children that is used to meet licensing regulations, accurately capture and monitor children’s attendance, and seamlessly submit reimbursement requests to state systems.

Aim 4: To examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE

Programs who used Alliance CORE features more often also rated the features as more useful and reported experiencing more benefits from using Alliance CORE. This association suggests that programs experience the benefits of Alliance CORE when they use the system more often.

Aim 5: To examine the association between Alliance CORE usage and perceived benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality

The majority of programs demonstrated improvements in teacher-child interaction quality over time. Most notably, significant improvements in teacher-child interaction quality were predicted by Alliance CORE frequency of use and reported usefulness. In other words, in programs that used Alliance CORE more frequently, for example, teacher-child interaction quality significantly increased.
INTRODUCTION

Early Learning Ventures (ELV) is a Colorado-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to expanding access to high-quality, affordable child care for young children. It was founded in 2009 by the David and Laura Merage Foundation with the belief that every child should be able to develop strong learning foundations through universal access to high-quality early childhood education, including center-based and home-based programs. David and Laura recognized that the majority of child care programs were small independent businesses that were passionate about caring for children, but lacked the capital and infrastructure to effectively improve the quality of their child care program. In fact, 85% of early childhood programs report lacking the infrastructure and resources to invest in quality improvement.

In response, ELV has focused on helping child care programs by developing a cloud-based child care management system called Alliance CORE. The goal of Alliance CORE is to streamline the administrative processes of child care programs. The system was built from the ground-up, taking into account child care licensing requirements and feedback from early childhood programs to ensure the system was relevant and useful for programs. Using Alliance CORE is intended to alleviate the administrative and regulatory burden related to enrollment, record-keeping, licensing, and monitoring. With these processes running more smoothly, programs are able to focus more of their time and effort on quality improvement that impacts the children and families in their care. To onboard programs and support their use of Alliance CORE, ELV provides intentional technical assistance that targets relationship building and client support. Alliance CORE users reported great satisfaction with the system in decreasing the administrative and regulatory burden.

In 2015, ELV was awarded a federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant (Grant 1) to provide direct comprehensive services to 240 infants, toddlers, and their families in four Colorado counties. In 2019, ELV was awarded a second EHS-CCP grant (Grant 2) to extend services to an additional 110 infants, toddlers, and their families in two additional counties. With both grants, ELV directly serves 350 infants, toddlers, and their families in six Colorado counties (Adams, Arapahoe, Garfield, Mesa, Morgan, and Pueblo), and this programming indirectly impacts over 3,000 children in 42 Child Care Partnership sites. Although Alliance CORE was originally designed to support programs in meeting licensing requirements and improving business operations, these two Early Head Start grants encouraged ELV to expand the utility of Alliance CORE to support programs in meeting Head Start Program Performance Standards (Early Head Start Standards).
Below is a description of specific Alliance CORE features that support programs in streamlining administrative processes, meeting licensing requirements, and meeting Early Head Start Standards.

► Tracking and monitoring information about the program
  • Program administrators use the **Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Setup** feature to document each program's basic information, such as name, address, phone number, hours of operation, and classroom names. This information is the starting point for each program on Alliance CORE, as the rest of the features are connected to this basic information.

► Tracking and monitoring information about children
  • The **Online Enrollment** feature enables programs to enroll children efficiently by collecting all the necessary information required by state licensing, such as child's basic information, parents' contact information, child's birth certificate, and parents' proof of custody/guardianship. Parents can enter this information directly into the Alliance CORE system.
  • After children are enrolled in care, the **Child File Management** feature stores all information, files, and documentation collected during enrollment, as well as more specific information about children and their families. Examples include child health information, such as immunization reports, screening results, health plans, and authorization forms signed by families for emergency medical treatment or participation in field trips. This feature also organizes other important information about the children in care, such as the classroom to which they are assigned and which teachers are responsible for each child.
  • The **Child Attendance** feature provides programs with an easy and secure method for parents to check their children in and out of the program. Parents use this feature through their own mobile phones or on “kiosks” (devices that are set up in the programs), and it enables the programs to document child attendance without using additional staff resources at the center.
  • The child attendance feature is used in connection with the **Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)** Attendance feature. As program staff verify and approve child attendance information, the CCCAP Attendance feature automatically sends the updated information directly to the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program’s attendance-tracking system. Alliance CORE is the only child care management system that is directly linked to the state’s CCCAP attendance-tracking system, enabling programs to easily manage the CCCAP reimbursement process.
  • The Child Attendance feature also provides information to the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Tracking and Reporting** feature on
providers for each child. This report is accepted by the CACFP state administrator for child care centers, which enables providers to submit for reimbursement with ease. Family child care providers can use this report to submit information to their CACFP sponsor.

► Tracking and monitoring information about staff
  - The Staff File Management feature has the capability of storing all files and documentation about program staff including basic information, qualifications (e.g., credential certificate, degree diploma, transcripts), and professional development activities (e.g., training sessions attended, coaching plans).
  - Similar to the Child Attendance feature, programs can track staff attendance using the Staff Attendance feature. This allows program staff to check in and out of work, and the staff attendance information can be used to monitor staff and child ratios.

► Tracking and monitoring information pertaining to families
  - The Parent File Management (also referred to as Documents’ Store) feature allows programs to store and organize information about each child’s parents and family members such as the parent handbook agreement, income eligibility forms, proof of residency, and family partnership agreements.
  - The Billing Module feature automates the process of billing families for tuition and fees. The feature can be adapted to meet the billing needs and schedules of each program. The Billing Module sends bills automatically, allows for all types of payment, sends yearly tax information, sends reminders, allows for customized billing cycles, can automate past due fees and messages, and has significant reporting capabilities.
EVALUATION AIMS

After several years of supporting programs in using Alliance CORE, ELV sought to gain a better understanding of how programs were using the system. They partnered with Quality Consulting and Research Group (QCRG) to evaluate administrators’ usage and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE. Together, the ELV team and QCRG outlined the following aims:

Aim 1: To understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE over time

Aim 2: To understand the extent to which programs perceive Alliance CORE to be beneficial

Aim 3: To understand programs’ frequency of use, method of updating, and usefulness of Alliance CORE features

Aim 4: To examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE

Aim 5: To examine the association between Alliance CORE usage and perceived benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality

To address these aims, the ELV and QCRG teams co-developed Alliance CORE Usage Survey (see Appendix A), an online survey for program administrators to report on their knowledge, usage, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE. This report provides descriptive results of the Alliance CORE Usage Survey analyses, an examination of whether use and benefits varied by program characteristics, and the association between Alliance CORE usage and teacher-child interaction quality.
Program administrators completed the Alliance CORE Usage Survey to report on their knowledge, usage, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE. The Alliance CORE Usage Survey consisted of three main sections: 1) General Alliance CORE Usage, 2) Alliance CORE Benefits, and 3) Alliance CORE Features. The General Alliance CORE Usage section includes questions about program administrators’ overall use of the Alliance CORE system over time and their knowledge of the system. The Alliance CORE Benefits section asked program administrators to report on the perceived benefits that their programs experienced from their use of the system. The Alliance CORE feature section includes a series of questions about each of the Alliance CORE features listed above. For each specific feature, program administrators were asked about their frequency of use, their method of updating, and its usefulness. Administrators were asked to think about the 2019-2020 academic year (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) when responding to questions about Alliance CORE usage.

The Alliance CORE Usage Survey was distributed to 53 program administrators across 41 programs in July of 2020 via SurveyMonkey, an online survey development cloud-based software. Each participant received a unique link to the survey. After receiving the link, participants were given 2 weeks to complete the survey, which was estimated to take between 30-45 minutes. ELV provided each participant with a $50 gift card as compensation for their time and effort in completing the survey.

There were a total of 46 responses across 36 participating programs, resulting in an 87.8% program response rate. For 10 of the programs, two program administrators from each program completed the survey to ensure that all Alliance CORE users were represented. For these programs, we aggregated the responses for each Alliance CORE feature to include the response of the administrator who used each feature the most, so that the program is only represented once. Additionally, there were three cases in which a single administrator completed the survey for two programs they manage. Our final sample and subsequent analyses included data from 36 participating programs.

In the tables below, the participating programs (N = 36) are broken down by program type (Child Care Centers or Family Child Care Homes), the years in which programs started as ELV EHS-CCP, whether programs are within EHS-CCP Grant 1 or 2, and the county in which the represented programs are located (Tables 1-4).
### Table 1. Participating Programs by Program Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Centers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Child Care Homes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Participating Programs by EHS-CCP Start Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EHS-CCP Start Years</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Participating Programs by EHS-CCP Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EHS-CCP Grants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant 1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant 2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Participating Programs by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Represented Counties</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams County</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arapahoe County</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield County</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesa County</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan County</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pueblo County</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scores from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System -- Toddler\(^1\) (CLASS-T) were used to examine the extent to which Alliance CORE reported usage and perceived benefits were associated with improvements in teacher-child interaction quality. The CLASS-T is a measure of teacher-child interaction quality used in classrooms with children who are 15-36 months old. The CLASS considers the frequency, duration, intensity, and depth of the interactions that support children's development across the daily routine. The CLASS-T includes two domains: Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS) and Engaged Support for Learning (ESL). Each domain is scored separately, and scores are aggregated across multiple observation cycles conducted in one morning. Scores are on a seven-point scale, with higher scores representing higher-quality interactions.

**EBS.** The Emotional and Behavioral Support domain focuses on teachers' behaviors that help children develop warm and supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, experience appropriate levels of independence, develop behavioral regulation, meet behavioral expectations, and fully participate in classroom activities.

**ESL.** The Engaged Support for Learning domain focuses on teachers' facilitation of activities that enhance children's thinking and reasoning skills, encourage persistence, attention, and motivation, and stimulate children's understanding and use of language.

For the purposes of this evaluation, domain scores were used for participating programs from observations that were programmatically conducted by the ELV. During the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, independent observers from Clayton Early Learning conducted CLASS observations. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year and ongoing, ELV EHS–CCP observer-certified staff and observer-certified community partners conducted CLASS observations. Table 5 describes the number of observations conducted during each school year.

Table 5. ELV EHS-CCP CLASS Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Years</th>
<th>Number of programs observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Observations conducted by the ELV were intended to be completed for each program at the beginning of the year (pre) and at the end of the year (post). However, due to teacher turnover, scheduling capacity, and other unanticipated circumstances, pre and post observations were not consistently completed. Observation assignments also varied between ELV staff observing classrooms that they directly support as a coach and ELV team members or community partners that do not typically work directly with the classroom.

3 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most classrooms were not observed during the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, we excluded the few observations that were conducted from the analyses.
RESULTS

The purpose of this evaluation was to better understand how programs were using Alliance CORE and the benefits they gained by using it. Additionally, we examined how usage and benefits of using Alliance CORE were associated with improved teacher-child interaction quality. Below we describe the approach we employed to address each of the five aims.

**Aim 1:** to understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE over time, we conducted descriptive statistics on the data collected in the General Alliance CORE Usage section of the survey.

**Aim 2:** to understand the extent to which programs perceive Alliance CORE to be beneficial, we conducted descriptive statistics on the data collected in the Alliance CORE Benefits section of the survey.

**Aim 3:** to understand programs’ frequency of use, method of updating, and usefulness of Alliance CORE features, we conducted descriptive statistics on the data collected in the Alliance CORE Features section of the survey.

**Aim 4:** to examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE, we conducted bivariate correlations between the total scores for frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits.

**Aim 5:** to examine the association between Alliance CORE usage and benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality, we conducted bivariate correlations between teacher-child interaction quality gains and the total scores for usefulness and perceived benefits.
Aim 1: To understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE over time

To understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE over time, we asked programs to: 1) describe their knowledge of Alliance CORE, 2) describe the system they were using before using Alliance CORE, and 3) describe their use of Alliance CORE over time. Below are the specific questions and response options that were included in the survey. For each item, the question is in quotations and the response options are in italics. Finally, we report the descriptive statistics results for each question.

Overall Alliance CORE Knowledge
“How knowledgeable do you feel using Alliance CORE?”
- Extremely
- Very
- Somewhat

Participating programs were asked how knowledgeable they felt using Alliance CORE. All programs reported feeling at least somewhat knowledgeable in how to use Alliance CORE: 36.1% of programs reported feeling somewhat knowledgeable, 50% reported feeling very knowledgeable, and 13.9% reported feeling extremely knowledgeable (see Figure 1). ELV provides individualized Alliance CORE onboarding and training for each program administrator. The customized training approach allows ELV to adjust the training pace to each administrator’s needs, ensuring that each administrator feels comfortable with the Alliance CORE system. Program administrators also have access to the Client Support team for technical assistance at any time.

Figure 1. Overall Alliance CORE Knowledge

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4 Program administrators were asked an additional question about their use of Alliance CORE’s Support Ticket feature. See Appendix B for details about the question and program administrators’ responses.
Systems Prior to Alliance CORE

“Before using Alliance Core, how did you track information/data?”
- Did not track information/data
- On paper
- Basic electronic system (e.g., Excel, Word)
- Other specialized computer program (e.g., Child Plus, Procare)
- Other

Prior to using Alliance CORE, participating programs used a variety of other systems to store and track information about their sites (see Figure 2). Specialized child care softwares (e.g., ChildPlus, Procare) were used by 25% of programs and 19.4% of programs used basic electronic softwares, such as Microsoft Excel. About half of programs (52.8%) managed their site information on paper, rather than using an electronic system. One program (2.8%) reported having no system to track information or data prior to Alliance CORE.

Having an organized system for tracking and storing information is important for any business. For early childhood care and education programs, this system is particularly important so administrators can ensure that they are following licensing regulations and Early Head Start Performance Standards to ultimately provide children and families with high quality services and supports. Alliance CORE helps to fill that need for programs, especially for those that did not have access to a comprehensive, computerized, and secure system. ELV’s approach is focused on partnership rather than product, and the Client Support team is always ready to support providers to use the Alliance CORE system successfully.

Figure 2. Systems Prior to Alliance CORE

- Specialized child care software 25.0%
- Basic electronic software 19.4%
- On paper 52.8%
- No system to track information or data 2.8%
**Overall Alliance CORE Use Over Time**

“Think about your first year using Alliance CORE compared to this year (before COVID). To what extent has your use of Alliance CORE changed?"

- Increased over time
- Stayed the same
- Decreased over time
- This is my first year using Alliance CORE.

Participating programs were asked how their use of Alliance CORE has changed over time. Since their adoption of Alliance CORE, programs’ use of Alliance CORE has generally increased over time: 91.7% of programs reported an increase in their use of Alliance CORE as compared to their first year using the system (see Figure 3). One program (2.8%) reported its use of Alliance CORE staying the same over time, and another program (2.8%) reported a decrease in its use of Alliance CORE over time. At the time of survey administration, one program (2.8%) was in their first year of partnership with ELV and was beginning its use of Alliance CORE. After providing an initial onboarding and training for program administrators, ELV continues to provide ongoing support for programs to increase their Alliance CORE use and proficiency. In addition to online Client Support access, a team of ELV staff, Child Care Partnership Specialists, provide individualized support around Alliance CORE as part of EHS-CCP services.

**Figure 3. Overall Alliance CORE Use Over Time**
Aim 2: To understand the extent to which programs perceive Alliance CORE to be beneficial

To understand the extent to which programs perceive Alliance CORE to be beneficial, we asked programs to: 1) describe the extent Alliance CORE was saving them time/energy/effort and 2) identify specific ways that their programs had benefited from using Alliance CORE. Below are the specific questions of the survey and response options that were included in the survey. For each item, the question is in quotations and the response options are in italics. Finally, we report the descriptive statistics for each question.

**Time, Energy, and Effort**

“To what extent has using Alliance CORE saved you time/energy/effort?”
- A lot
- Some
- A little
- Not at all

If programs selected a lot, some, or a little, they were asked “As a result of saving time/energy/effort, what have you been able to accomplish/dedicate more time to?”

The majority of participating programs (75%) reported that using Alliance CORE saved their programs a lot of time, energy, and effort; 16.7% of program administrators reported it saved them some time, energy, and effort; 8.3% of program administrators reported it saved them a little time, energy, and effort (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Time, Energy, and Effort Saved due to Alliance CORE**

- A little: 8.3%
- A lot: 75.0%
- Some: 16.7%
Because of the time, energy, and effort that Alliance CORE saved, programs were able to focus on other site needs and priorities. Programs reported having more time to dedicate to improving program quality, including efforts to improve their programs’ Colorado Shines rating, Colorado’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Programs also reported having more time to engage with children and families, and support teachers and staff.

As a result of saving time/energy/effort, what have you been able to accomplish/dedicate more time to?

“I have been able to spend more time in the classrooms supporting teachers.”

“More time to engage with the children, teachers, and parents”

“Growing our center”

“I was able to focus more on my Colorado Shines rating!”

“Quality improvement”
Specific Alliance CORE Benefits

We examined the number of benefits endorsed across all participating programs. Administrators were asked to select all benefits that applied to their program (listed below). On average, programs endorsed 11 specific benefits (ranging between 3-21 benefits). Benefits in bold are those that at least 50% of all programs endorsed. Table 6 lists the endorsement rates of all benefits across all participating programs.

“How has using Alliance CORE helped your program? Select all that apply.”

- Using Alliance CORE saves us money (admin time cost, compared to other software, resource platform discounts, etc.).
- Alliance CORE makes it easy to track health and safety in our program.
- Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.
- Licensing inspections run more smoothly.
- Our team is able to dedicate more time to interactions with children.
- We’re able to make more informed decisions about staffing patterns.
- We use the system to better plan for time off.
- Teacher retention has increased.
- We’re better able to maintain and monitor teacher:child ratios.
- We know when children are absent and can conduct welfare check-ins.
- Maintaining updated contact information for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.
- Family engagement/communication with families has increased.
- Communication with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.
- We can ensure that teachers are engaging in ongoing professional development.
- It’s easier and quicker to complete CCAP billing.
- It’s easier and quicker to complete CACFP billing.
- Our program has a higher level of income from CCAP due to accurate and complete data.
- Our program has a higher level of income from CACFP due to accurate and complete data.
- It’s faster and easier to collect payment from families.
- Our program has a higher level of income from using the billing module.
- It’s easy to monitor our program’s quality improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.
**Table 6. Benefit Endorsement: All Participating Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Endorsement (all programs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.</td>
<td>86.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining <strong>updated contact information</strong> for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.</td>
<td>80.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier and quicker to complete CCCAP billing.</td>
<td>77.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy to monitor our program’s <strong>quality</strong> improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy to track <strong>health and safety</strong> in our program.</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We know when children are absent and can conduct <strong>welfare check-ins</strong>.</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing inspections run more smoothly.</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family engagement</strong>/communication with families has increased.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong> with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our team is able to dedicate more time to <strong>interactions</strong> with children.</td>
<td>58.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can ensure that teachers are engaging in ongoing <strong>professional development</strong>.</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Alliance CORE saves us <strong>money</strong> (admin time cost, compared to other software, resource platform discounts, etc.)</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier and quicker to complete <strong>CACFP billing</strong>.</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re better able to maintain and monitor teacher:child <strong>ratios</strong>.</td>
<td>47.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program has a higher level of <strong>income from CCCAP</strong> due to accurate and complete data.</td>
<td>44.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program has a higher level of <strong>income from CACFP</strong> due to accurate and complete data.</td>
<td>30.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s faster and easier to <strong>collect payment</strong> from families.</td>
<td>27.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re able to make more informed decisions about <strong>staffing</strong> patterns.</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We use the system to better plan for <strong>time off</strong>.</td>
<td>16.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program has a higher level of <strong>income</strong> from using the <strong>billing module</strong>.</td>
<td>16.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher <strong>retention</strong> has increased.</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Closer Look at Program Characteristics

After examining how programs endorsed specific benefits, we examined whether benefit endorsement differed by the following program characteristics: program type (centers or FCC), length of time with ELV (start year), grant (grant 1 & grant 2), and program county. Below, we describe the descriptive statistics results for each of the program characteristics, respectively.

Type of Program

First, we examined whether the number of benefits that programs endorsed varied by type of program: child care centers \((n = 21)\) and family child care homes \((n = 15)\). Analyses indicated that child care centers identified more benefits, on average, than family child care homes (FCCH; see Figure 5).

On average, child care centers endorsed approximately 12 specific benefits (ranging between 4 - 18 benefits), whereas FCCH endorsed approximately 10 benefits (ranging between 3 - 21 benefits). Additionally, there were several benefits that were more highly endorsed by child care centers than FCCH. For example, all child care centers (100%) identified the ability to monitor children's attendance and conduct welfare check-ins as a benefit of using Alliance CORE, whereas only 40% of FCCH identified this as a benefit. We found a similar pattern for the following benefits: the ease and speed of communications with families and staff (81% of child care centers, 46.7% of FCCH); the ability to monitor continuous engagement in professional development (57.1% of child care centers, 40% of FCCH); the ability to maintain and monitor teacher-child ratios (57.1% of child care centers, 33.3% of FCCH); money saved due to time costs and discounted pricing (52.4% of child care centers, 46.7% of FCCH); and an increased income from CCAP due to accurate and complete data (52.4% of child care centers, 33.3% of FCCH).

Table 7 lists the 10 most highly endorsed benefits by child care centers, and Table 8 lists the 10 most highly endorsed benefits by FCCH. Table 9 lists all the benefits and endorsement levels by program type, ordered by center endorsement (see Appendix C for list of benefits and endorsement levels by program type, ordered by FCCH endorsement).
The differences in endorsement rates between child care centers and FCCH may be attributable to program size. Child care centers are typically larger than family child care programs, providing services for a larger number of children and families, and employing a larger number of staff. Prior to using Alliance CORE, monitoring and tracking information with ease and efficiency may have been more difficult for larger programs than for smaller programs. The benefits described above may have played a larger role in facilitating communication and monitoring in programs with more children, families, and staff.

Figure 5. Alliance CORE Benefit Endorsement by Program Type
### Table 7. Benefit Endorsement: Top 10 Most Highly Endorsed by Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We know when children are absent and can conduct welfare check-ins.</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.</td>
<td>90.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining updated contact information for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easier and quicker to complete CCCAP billing.</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance CORE makes it easy to track health and safety in our program.</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easier and quicker to complete CACFP billing.</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easy to monitor our program's quality improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family engagement/communication with families has increased.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing inspections run more smoothly.</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8. Benefit Endorsement: Top 10 Most Highly Endorsed by FCCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>FCCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensing inspections run more smoothly.</td>
<td>93.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easy to monitor our program's quality improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>86.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining updated contact information for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easier and quicker to complete CCCAP billing.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance CORE makes it easy to track Health and Safety in our program.</td>
<td>73.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family engagement/communication with families has increased.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our team is able to dedicate more time to interactions with children.</td>
<td>53.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.</td>
<td>46.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Alliance CORE saves us money (admin time cost, compared to other software, resource platform discounts, etc.).</td>
<td>46.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefit Centers FCCH

We know when children are absent and can conduct welfare check-ins.
100.00% 40.00%

Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.
90.50% 80.00%

Maintaining updated contact information for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.
81.00% 80.00%

Communication with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.
81.00% 46.70%

It’s easier and quicker to complete CCCAP billing.
76.20% 80.00%

Alliance CORE makes it easy to track health and safety in our program.
76.20% 73.30%

It’s easier and quicker to complete CACFP billing.
76.20% 13.30%

It’s easy to monitor our program’s quality improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.
66.70% 86.70%

Family engagement/communication with families has increased.
66.70% 66.70%

Licensing inspections run more smoothly.
61.90% 93.30%

Our team is able to dedicate more time to interactions with children.
61.90% 53.30%

We can ensure that teachers are engaging in ongoing professional development.
57.10% 40.00%

We’re better able to maintain and monitor teacher:child ratios.
57.10% 33.30%

Using Alliance CORE saves us money (admin time cost, compared to other software, resource platform discounts, etc.).
52.40% 46.70%

Our program has a higher level of income from CCCAP due to accurate and complete data.
52.40% 33.30%

Our program has a higher level of income from CACFP due to accurate and complete data.
42.90% 13.30%

It’s faster and easier to collect payment from families.
33.30% 20.00%

We’re able to make more informed decisions about staffing patterns.
33.30% 13.30%

Our program has a higher level of income from using the billing module.
19.00% 13.30%

We use the system to better plan for time off.
14.30% 20.00%

Teacher retention has increased.
9.50% 6.70%

The percentage of administrators who endorsed each benefit is ordered from highest to lowest by Centers.
EHS-CCP Partnership Start Year

Then we examined whether the number of benefits that programs endorsed varied by the year in which they began their EHS-CCP partnership with ELV (start year). Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the average number of benefits programs endorsed by start year. “Experienced programs” (programs that began their EHS-CCP partnership with ELV in 2018 or earlier, \( n = 22 \)) endorsed more benefits than “new programs” (programs that began their EHS-CCP partnership with ELV in 2019 or later, \( n = 14 \)). Experienced programs endorsed an average of approximately 12 benefits, whereas new programs endorsed an average of approximately 10 benefits. It is possible that administrators in new programs may not be as familiar with Alliance CORE as administrators in experienced programs who have been using Alliance CORE for more time. Administrators who have used Alliance CORE for longer may have more experience with Alliance CORE’s utilities and benefits.

Note: No programs began their partnership with ELV EHS in 2016.

Figure 6. Alliance CORE Benefit Endorsement by Start Year

Grant

We also examined whether the number of benefits that programs endorsed varied by program grant: Grant 1 (\( n = 26 \)) and Grant 2 (\( n = 10 \)). Analyses indicated that, on average, Grant 1 programs identified more benefits (approximately 12) than Grant 2 programs (approximately 9; see Figure 7). Given that EHS-CCP Grant 1 funding began in 2015 and Grant 2 funding began in 2019, the difference in benefit endorsement may be attributable to the time programs have been in partnership with ELV and using Alliance CORE. This aligns with the finding (described above) that new programs identify fewer benefits from Alliance CORE.
Finally, we examined whether the number of benefits that program administrators endorsed varied by county: Adams County \((n = 4)\), Arapahoe County \((n = 7)\), Garfield County \((n = 4)\), Mesa County \((n = 12)\), Morgan County, \((n = 3)\), and Pueblo County \((n = 6)\). Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the average number of benefits programs endorsed by county. Among participating counties, Pueblo County programs endorsed the greatest number of benefits, on average, \((13)\), whereas Morgan County program administrators endorsed the fewest number of benefits on average \((4)\). It is important to note that all of the programs in Morgan County are FCCH who began their partnership with ELV EHS between 2019 and 2020. This finding also aligns with earlier findings: administrators in new and smaller programs may not be as familiar with Alliance CORE as administrators in experienced and larger programs who have been using Alliance CORE for more time.
Aim 3: To understand programs’ frequency of use, method of updating, and usefulness of Alliance CORE features

To understand programs’ frequency of use, method of updating, and usefulness of the specific Alliance CORE features, we asked program administrators about their use of 10 Alliance CORE features\(^5\), which support programs in streamlining administrative processes, meeting licensing requirements, and meeting Early Head Start Performance Standards. Administrators were asked to think about their use of each feature during the 2019-2020 school year, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic within the Alliance CORE features section of the survey. All programs were asked how frequently they used each feature (Frequency of Use). Programs that reported that they used a feature to some extent were also asked how they updated the feature (Updating Method) and about the feature’s usefulness (Usefulness). The specific question(s) we asked for each feature are in quotations and the response options are in italics.

**Frequency of Use:** “How often do you use this feature?”

- I never use it
- I use it once or twice a year
- I use it once every three months (quarterly)
- I use it once a month
- I use it once a week
- I use it every day

If programs selected I never use it, they were asked “Why don’t you use this feature?”

- I don’t find it useful for my program
- It is somebody else’s role
- We use another system for this
- I don’t feel comfortable/don’t know enough about this feature
- I don’t have enough time
- Other (please specify)

If programs selected I don’t find it useful for my program, they were asked “Why do you think the Child Attendance feature is not useful for your site?” and were provided with an open text box to fill in their responses.

If programs selected We use another system for this, they were asked “What system do you currently use for this feature?” and were provided with an open text box to fill in their responses.

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\(^5\) An additional feature was included in the Alliance CORE Usage Survey, the Health and Safety Checks Documentation feature. Although this feature was included in some analyses (Total Scores, discussed below), this feature is otherwise excluded from this report. The feature and its functionality were not well-defined when submitted for inclusion in the survey. In reviewing survey responses, ELV determined that program administrators were thinking of a different feature rather than the feature ELV initially intended to capture.
Updating Method: “How do you update this feature?”
- In the moment (as updates come up)
- In a batch once there are several/many updates to make
- Other (please specify)

Usefulness: “To what extent do you find this feature useful?”
- Not at all useful
- Slightly useful
- Somewhat useful
- Useful
- Very useful
- Extremely useful

If programs selected not at all useful, they were asked “Why do you think the Child Attendance feature is not useful for your site?” and were provided with an open text box to fill in their responses.

If programs reported that the feature was at least slightly useful, they were asked “In what ways is this feature useful for your site?”

For each feature, the updating method and usefulness results include only responses from program administrators who used the feature to some extent (at least once or twice a year).
Below are descriptions of the 10 Alliance CORE features that were included in the survey.

Features for tracking and monitoring information about the program

- **Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Setup.** Program administrators use this feature to document each program's basic information, such as name, address, phone number, hours of operation, and classroom names.

Features for tracking and monitoring information about children

- **Online Enrollment.** This feature enables programs to enroll children efficiently by collecting all of the necessary information required by state licensing, such as child's basic information, parents' contact information, child's birth certificate, and parents' proof of custody/guardianship.

- **Child File Management.** This feature stores all information, files, and documentation collected during enrollment, as well as more specific information about children and their families, such as child immunization reports, screening results, health plans, and authorization forms signed by families for emergency medical treatment or participation in field trips.

- **Child Attendance.** This feature provides programs with an easy and secure method for parents to check their children in and out of the program and for documenting children's attendance throughout the school year.

- **Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Attendance.** As program staff verify and approve child attendance information, this feature automatically sends the updated information directly to the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program's attendance-tracking system.

- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Tracking and Reporting.** This feature uses the child attendance data to auto-populate an electronic report of meals distributed by the providers for each child. Programs can submit this report to the CACFP state administrator or their CACFP sponsor.

Features for tracking and monitoring information about staff

- **Staff File Management.** This feature has the capability of storing all files and documentation about program staff including basic information, qualifications (e.g., credential certificate, degree diploma, transcripts), and professional development activities (e.g., training sessions attended, coaching plans).

- **Staff Attendance.** This allows program staff to check in and out of work, and the staff attendance information can be used to monitor staff to child ratios.

Features for tracking and monitoring information pertaining to families

- **Parent File Management.** This feature allows programs to store and organize information about each child's parents and family members, such as the parent handbook agreement, income eligibility forms, proof of residency, and family partnership agreements.

- **Billing Module.** This feature automates the process of billing families for tuition and fees.
Features for tracking and monitoring information about the program
Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up

Frequency of Use

The Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up feature is used to document each program’s basic information, such as name, address, phone number, hours of operation, and classroom names. Typically, program administrators are expected to enter or update their site’s programmatic information into Alliance CORE at the beginning of each school year and update the program information, schedule, and room set up as changes occur.

Aligned with the expected use of this feature, the most common frequency was once or twice a year (22.2%). Other programs used this feature more frequently: 19.4% used it quarterly, 16.7% used it monthly, 13.9% used it weekly, and 16.7% used it daily (see Figure 9). It is possible that programs that reported more frequent use may have experienced more changes throughout the year than programs that reported less frequent use, such as schedule adjustments and changes in classroom configuration. There were also four programs (11.1%) that reported never using the feature. Three of the programs that reported never using the feature were FCCH, and they reported either not knowing about this feature (n = 1) or not feeling knowledgeable enough to use this feature (n = 2). In total, 88.9 % of programs (n = 32) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

Figure 9. Frequency of Use: Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up

Updating Method

Of the programs that used the Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up feature at least to some extent (n = 32), the majority (78.1%) update this feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 10). Other programs (21.9%) reported that they update this feature in a batch, or when there are multiple updates to make.

Figure 10. Updating Method: Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up
Usefulness

Of the programs that used the Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up feature to some extent \((n = 32)\), almost all (90.7%) reported that it was at least useful: 6.3% selected extremely useful, 21.9% very useful, and 62.5% useful. Another 3.1% selected somewhat useful and 3.1% selected slightly useful (see Figure 11). Programs reported that this feature helped them to keep information organized, run reports easily, monitor and plan for enrollment, and set and track schedules. One program (3.1%) reported that this feature was not at all useful and explained that their program was small.

In what ways is the Provider Primary information, Schedules, and Room Setup feature useful for your site?

“... being able to run reports...information can easily be edited or updated.”

“Helps to maintain policies and regulations”

“Keeps everything up to date”

“I can set child schedules, since all my kids have varying schedules, and it makes it easy to see who is scheduled for that day.”

“[Helps to] plan and schedule for new enrollment and EHS slots”

“Room set up is great, we have many rooms in CORE to let us know [when and where] staff is checking in”

“knowing...enrollment percentage”
Features for tracking and monitoring information about children

Online Enrollment

Frequency of Use

The Online Enrollment feature enables programs to enroll children efficiently by collecting all the necessary information required by state licensing, such as child’s basic information, parent’s contact information, child’s birth certificate, and parent’s proof of custody/guardianship. This feature should be used whenever a new child enrolls in the program. Typically, this feature is most frequently used during the recruitment period (when multiple children are enrolling simultaneously), but children may enroll at any point in the year.

The frequency of use of the Online Enrollment feature varied widely among programs ($N = 36$; see Figure 12). The most common frequency of use for this feature was monthly (25%, $n = 9$). Nine programs reported using the online enrollment feature less frequently - either once or twice a year (11.1%, $n = 4$) or quarterly (13.9%, $n = 5$). Of these nine programs, seven were FCCH. Given that FCCH tend to have fewer children enrolled than centers, they may experience fewer changes in enrollment throughout the year. Ten programs reported using the feature more frequently - either weekly (16.7%, $n = 6$) or daily (11.1%, $n = 4$). Eight of these more frequent users were child care centers. Given that child care centers tend to have greater enrollment than FCCH, they may experience more changes in enrollment throughout the year.

Another eight programs (22.2%) reported never using the feature and provided the following explanations: three child care centers reported not feeling knowledgeable enough to use this feature; one FCCH reported not knowing about the feature; one child care center that began their EHS partnership in 2019, reported not using the feature yet, but wanting to use it in the future; three programs reported using other systems for online enrollment, consisting of customized enrollment forms and packets that have been working well for the program’s families. In total, 77.8% of programs ($n = 28$) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

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**Figure 12. Frequency of Use: Online Enrollment**

![Chart showing frequency of use for Online Enrollment feature](chart.png)
Updating Method

Of the programs that used the Online Enrollment feature to some extent ($n = 28$), the majority (85.7%) reported that they update this feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 13). Other programs (10.7%) reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there are multiple updates to make or multiple children to enroll and one program (3.6%) reported updating this feature using another method.

Usefulness

Of the programs that used the Online Enrollment feature to some extent ($n = 28$), almost all (89.4%) reported that it was at least useful: 42.9% selected extremely useful, 28.6% selected very useful, and 17.9% selected useful (see Figure 14). Another 7.1% selected somewhat useful and 3.6% selected slightly useful. Many programs reported this feature considerably improved the management and tracking of children's information, and eliminated the need for wasteful paperwork. Programs expressed that this feature helped families update information quickly, saving the program staff’s time and generating more complete and accurate information.
In what ways is the Online Enrollment feature useful for your site?

“"It cuts back on organization of paperwork, it keeps it all in one area. It’s easier for the parents to just fill it out and it goes right into CORE”"

“"It eliminates paperwork and time.”"

“"Helps cut down on how much wasted printing of paperwork. Parents are able to keep the handbook closer for reference.”"

“"I like that the parents can put in their own information and update it when needed/when I ask them to.”"

“"I LOVE THIS FEATURE”"

“"The online enrollment is useful to my site because parents have to fill out all necessary information to continue through the application..which helps reduce not having all information...""

“"We know the information is more accurate because parents entered it.”"

“"So much easier to gather information in one place”"
Child File Management

Frequency of Use

The Child File Management feature stores all information, files, and documentation collected during enrollment, as well as more specific information about children and their families, such as child health information and authorization forms signed by families. This feature also organizes other important information about the children in care, such as the classroom to which they are assigned and which teachers are responsible for each child. Typically, this feature is used during the recruitment period since the information about the child is collected during enrollment. It is also used often throughout the year to update children’s health information or change in children's classroom assignments/teachers.

Over half (55.6%) of all programs (N =36) reported using the Child File Management feature daily (see Figure 15). Child care centers made up the majority of daily users (child care centers n = 15; FCCH n = 5). Other programs reported using it weekly (13.9%), monthly, (16.7%), or quarterly (11.1%). One program (2.8%) reported never using the Child File Management feature, but expressed an intent to use it in the future once their information was “set up.” In general, most child care centers reported using the feature daily, whereas use among FCCH varied more widely. This difference may be attributable to the number of children who are enrolled. Child care centers, on average, provide services for more children and classrooms than FCCH, resulting in a need to make more updates about children’s medical records or changes in classroom assignments. In total, 97.2% of programs (n = 35) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

Figure 15. Frequency of Use: Child File Management

| Updating Method |

Of the programs that used the Child File Management feature (n = 35), the majority (77.1%) reported that they update this feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 16). Other programs (20.0%) reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there were multiple updates to make.
Usefulness

Of the programs that used the Child File Management feature to some extent ($n = 35$), almost all (97.1%) reported that it was at least useful: 40.0% selected extremely useful, 31.4% selected very useful, and 25.7% selected useful (see Figure 17). Another 2.9% selected slightly useful. Many programs reported that this feature helps to keep children’s information up to date, easily accessible, and stored in one convenient location. According to programs, particularly useful aspects of this feature included running reports that are used to prepare for licensing inspections and alerts to notify administrators when screenings and immunizations are up for renewal.

In what ways is the Child File Management feature useful for your site?

“Keep all files in one place”

“Keeps health files, other information that licensing or myself need. Not as much paperwork to file if parents download health & shot records”

“Electronic retrieval is very convenient.”

“It keeps my children's files organized. I know when updates are needed”

“I like that the child file management helps organize child’s paperwork and reminds you of expiring items.”

“Keep files up to date, files are at-a-glance, easy for licensing inspections”
**Child Attendance**

**Frequency of Use**

The Child Attendance feature provides programs with an easy and secure method for parents to check their children in and out of the program. Parents use this feature through their own mobile phones or on "kiosks" (devices that are set up in programs), and it enables the programs to document child attendance without utilizing much of the staff resources at the center. The program staff is only responsible for verifying children’s attendance based on the parents’ check-ins and check-outs. It is expected for programs to use this feature daily to track children’s daily attendance.

As expected, the Child Attendance feature was the most frequently used Alliance CORE feature, and almost all programs (N = 36) reported using this feature daily (94.4%; see Figure 18). One program (2.8%) reported using this feature weekly, and one program (2.8%) reported using this feature monthly. It is possible that programs that reported using the feature weekly or monthly may have been referring to how often they verify the information on Alliance CORE rather than how often the program uses the feature. In total, 100% of programs (N = 36) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

**Figure 18. Frequency of Use: Child Attendance**

![Figure 18](image)

**Updating Method**

The majority of programs (75%) reported that they update the Child Attendance feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 19). This result aligns with the high frequency of use for this feature. Other programs (13.9%) reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there were multiple updates to make. Four programs (11.1%) reported updating this feature using another method, and reported that this method was task-dependent rather than change-dependent (e.g., an administrator had to update the information to turn in a report).
Usefulness

The Child Attendance feature had the most favorable usefulness ratings among all of the features (see Figure 20). All programs (100%) reported that this feature was at least useful: 77.8% selected *extremely useful*, 11.1% selected *very useful*, and 11.1% selected *useful*. Programs reported that this feature enabled them to successfully monitor children’s attendance in an efficient way, eliminating the need for unnecessary paperwork. Programs also reported that this feature allowed them to more easily verify absences, conduct welfare checks, and run reports that could be used for billing purposes.

**In what ways is the Child Attendance feature useful for your site?**

“It is easier to see all of the kids clocked in and out. It is also easier to see if a parent did not sign in or out. Before we used paper and it was a nightmare.”

“It is useful for our site to keep track of how many children are in the center each day. It is also helpful for us when we do the food program billing at the end of each month.”

“Elimination of paper, preparing taxes, reconciling CCAP, instant retrieval of data…”

“Keep us on top of the attendance and help us to contact the parent when we need to check on the kids absences.”

“Helps keep me on track with who is here. Especially when I forget to mark someone absent on my paper copy.”

“Runs reports on each child’s attendance.”

“I can see who is signed in and who didn’t sign out and…see ratios.”

“I am able to keep track of numbers in the classrooms and ratios.”

“No more paper attendance forms!”
**CCCAP Attendance**

**Frequency of Use**

As child attendance data is verified and approved, the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Attendance feature automatically sends the updated information directly to the state’s attendance-tracking system, enabling programs to easily manage the CCCAP reimbursement process. Programs are required to approve the data on a monthly basis to receive reimbursement from CCCAP; ELV recommends reviewing the CCCAP Attendance daily to verify that the information is accurate.

As expected, the majority (82.8%) of programs \( (n = 35^7) \) reported using the CCCAP feature at least *monthly* (see Figure 21). About half of programs (51.4%) reported using the CCCAP attendance feature *daily*, 17.1% reported using the feature *weekly*, and 14.3% reported using the feature *monthly*. One FCCH (2.9%) reported using this feature *quarterly*, which is less frequent than expected. It is possible that the FCCH does not have CCCAP-enrolled children who receive care every month or there may be another FCCH staff member who helps with CCCAP Attendance. Five programs (14.3%) reported *never* using the feature. Three of the programs that never used the feature were child care centers: two centers specified that other staff in their program managed CCCAP attendance and one reported that they manage CCCAP directly through the CCCAP system, rather than using Alliance CORE. Two of the programs that never used the feature were FCCH: one reported not knowing how to use the feature and the other reported having no CCCAP-enrolled children at the time of survey administration and therefore did not need this feature. In total, 85.7% of programs \( (n = 32) \) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least *once or twice a year*).

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\(^7\) One program did not provide a clear response to this follow up question and as a result the response was not included.
Updating Method

Although the CCCAP feature of Alliance CORE sends information directly to the state’s system, program administrators are sometimes required to update children’s CCCAP Authorization Identification any time a child’s information changes in some way, such as a change of guardian, change of address, or a shift from full-time enrollment to part-time enrollment.

Of the programs that used the CCCAP Attendance feature to some extent (n = 32), the majority (78.1%) reported updating this feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 22). Other programs (15.6%) reported updating the feature in a batch, or when there are multiple updates to make. Two programs (6.3%) reported updating the feature in another method -- one program explained that their method of updating depended on the kind of updates that they had to make and the other program reported they were not sure how to update the data in the system.

Usefulness

Of the programs that used the CCCAP Attendance feature to some extent (n = 32), almost all (96.9%) reported that this feature is at least useful: 62.5% selected extremely useful, 21.9% selected very useful, and 12.5% selected useful (see Figure 23). Another 3.1% selected somewhat useful. Programs reported that this feature enabled them to submit their reimbursement monthly with ease, track CCCAP expirations and renewals, and monitor accuracy and CCCAP reimbursement payments.
In what ways is the CCCAP Attendance feature useful for your site?

“Allows me to check and make sure my payments from CCCAP are accurate. Also to check attendance and authorizations.”

“I love not having to sign out of CORE and going to a different site, it makes it very convenient”

“I use it to print off CCCAP payments once a month when itemizing”

“It has saved me hours a week making sure everyone is... (entered) correctly so we get paid correctly and on time.”

“Less paperwork to fill out. I don’t have to drive to drop off paperwork”

“The ATS has been helpful for our center working together with ELV so that parents only have to do one login and log out rather than two. It has helped us keep up with billing and knowing what we should be getting at the end of each week is helpful too!”

“The report is sent to ATS, so only have to check in once. Then, with email reminders, I can be sure kiosk logins are correct.”
**Frequency of Use**

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Tracking and Reporting feature uses the child attendance data on Alliance CORE to auto-populate an electronic report of meals distributed by the providers to each child. This report is accepted by the CACFP state administrator for child care centers, which enables providers to submit for reimbursement with ease. FCCH can also use this report to submit information to their CACFP sponsor. The CACFP requires that programs submit monthly claims to receive reimbursement for the meals that they provided.

The frequency of use of the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature varied widely across programs ($N = 36$). This feature was among the least used of all the features - over a third of programs (38.9%) reported never using the feature. The most common reason for not using the feature was using another system to manage CACFP Tracking and Reporting ($n = 8$), especially for FCCH ($n = 6$).

Several FCCH specified using sponsor-required CACFP programs, such as CACFPNet. Other programs reported using paper claims and documents to manage meal distribution and reimbursement tracking. Two FCCH reported never using the feature because they did not feel knowledgeable enough ($n = 1$) or did not know about the feature ($n = 1$). Centers specified several different reasons for not using the feature, including not participating in the CACFP program ($n = 1$), having other staff who managed the CACFP Tracking and Reporting ($n = 1$), and still being in the process of setting up the system to use the feature in the future ($n = 2$).

Approximately 22.2% of programs reported using the feature monthly, which aligns with the expected use of the feature (see Figure 24). Other programs reported more frequent use of the feature: 11.1% reported using it weekly and 22.2% of program administrators reported using it daily. One program (2.8%) reported using the feature quarterly and another one (2.8%) reported using it once or twice a year - both programs were FCCH who may follow a different reporting schedule as required by their CACFP sponsor. In total, 61.1% of programs ($n = 23$) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

![Figure 24. Frequency of Use: CACFP Tracking and Reporting](image-url)
Updating Method

Of the programs that used the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature to some extent \((n = 23)\), the majority of programs (73.9%) reported that they update this feature *in the moment*, or as changes occur (see Figure 25). Other programs (21.7%) reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there are multiple updates to make. One program (4.3%) administrator reported updating this feature in another method, but did not elaborate on their response.

![Figure 25. Updating Method: CACFP Tracking and Reporting](image)

Usefulness

Of the programs that used the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature to some extent \((n = 22)\), almost all (90.9%) reported that it was at least useful: 50.0% selected extremely useful, 22.7% selected very useful, and 18.2% selected useful (see Figure 26). Another 4.5% selected slightly useful. Programs reported that the CACFP feature enabled them to efficiently submit invoices and reports to the CACFP system and allowed them to keep all necessary documentation organized in one place.

![Figure 26. Usefulness: CACFP Tracking and Reporting](image)

---

*One program administrator who reported using this feature did not answer this question.*
In what ways is the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature useful for your site?

“It makes it a lot easier to fill out the form for CACFP billing and making sure parents’ income eligibility forms aren’t about to expire.”

“Less paper to print and electronic signatures”

“Helps keep everything organized and easy to find.”

“One stop shop, I don’t have to use multiple sites”

“Saves so much time at billing time”

“The reports are very clear and useful in order to quickly turn in the month’s invoice.”
Below, the individual figures for features for tracking and monitoring information about children (Online Enrollment, Child File Management, Child Attendance, CCCAP Attendance & CACFP Tracking and Reporting) are presented together for comparison.

**Figure 27. Frequency of Use:**
Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Children

**Figure 28. Updating Method:**
Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Children
Figure 29. Usefulness: Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Children

- **CACFP Tracking & Reporting**
  - Not at all useful: 4.5%
  - Slightly useful: 4.5%
  - Somewhat useful: 18.2%
  - Useful: 22.7%
  - Very useful: 60.0%

- **CCCAP Attendance**
  - Not at all useful: 3.1%
  - Slightly useful: 12.5%
  - Somewhat useful: 21.9%
  - Useful: 62.5%

- **Child Attendance**
  - Not at all useful: 11.1%
  - Slightly useful: 11.1%
  - Somewhat useful: 77.8%

- **Child File Management**
  - Not at all useful: 2.6%
  - Slightly useful: 25.7%
  - Somewhat useful: 31.4%
  - Useful: 40.0%

- **Online Enrollment**
  - Not at all useful: 3.6%
  - Slightly useful: 7.1%
  - Somewhat useful: 17.9%
  - Useful: 28.6%
  - Very useful: 42.9%

Legend:
- Not at all useful
- Slightly useful
- Somewhat useful
- Useful
- Very useful
- Extremely useful
Features for tracking and monitoring information about staff

Staff File Management

Frequency of Use

The Staff File Management feature stores all files and documentation about program staff including basic information, qualifications, and professional development activities. Typically, this feature is first utilized during the hiring process and later updated when staff earn additional qualifications or have completed professional development experiences.

The frequency of use of the Staff File Management feature was evenly distributed across programs \((n = 35)\): 20.0% of programs reported using this feature daily, 22.9% reported using it weekly, 20.0% reported using it monthly, 2.9% reported using it quarterly, 20.0% reported using it once or twice a year (see Figure 30). This variability in use may represent the frequency with which administrators update this information or it can reflect variability in the professional development experiences in which the teachers participate. Five programs (14.3%) reported never using this feature. Although ELV expects programs with only one staff member to use this feature to maintain their own file up to date, two FCCH that reported never using this feature explained that they did not use this feature because they did not have any additional staff. Three new programs that joined the ELV EHS partnership in 2019 or 2020 each specified different reasons for not using this feature: they did not feel knowledgeable enough to use this feature, they were not sure what the feature’s functionality was, and they had not begun to use it yet. In total, 85.7% of programs \((n = 30)\) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent \((at least once or twice a year)\).

Figure 30. Frequency of Use: Staff File Management
**Updating Method**

Of the programs that used the Staff File Management feature to some extent (n = 30), the majority (76.7%) reported that they update this feature *in the moment*, or as changes occurred, which aligns with the variability in this feature’s frequency of use (see Figure 31). These programs explained that they update the information in this feature as staff members earn additional qualifications or attend professional development experiences. Other programs (16.7%) reported updating this feature *in a batch*, or when there were multiple updates to make. Two programs (6.7%) reported updating this feature using another method, depending on the specific task to be completed.

*Figure 31. Updating Method: Staff File Management*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Updating Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the moment</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a batch</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Usefulness**

Of the programs that used the Staff File Management feature to some extent (n = 30), the majority (86.7%) reported that it was at least *useful*: 33.3% selected *extremely useful*, 26.7% selected very useful, and 26.7% selected *useful* (see Figure 32). Another 6.7% selected *somewhat useful*. Programs reported that this feature enabled them to monitor staff credentials in an organized way. They reported that tracking professional development hours and training within this system ensured the licensing inspections went more smoothly. Only two programs (6.7%; 1 FCCH & 1 center) reported that this feature was *not at all useful*. The FCCH explained they did not find it useful because they did not have additional staff. The child care center explained that they did not find this feature useful because it was “not used by licensing inspection.” It is important to note that licensing specialists’ use of Alliance CORE for inspection purposes varies from county to county. For example, licensing specialists can opt to use Alliance CORE to directly review relevant information, but licensing specialists did not consistently use Alliance CORE.

*Figure 32. Usefulness: Staff File Management*
Staff Attendance

Frequency of Use

The Staff Attendance feature allows programs to track their staff attendance as they can check in and out of work. Similarly to the child attendance feature, program staff are only responsible for verifying the staff attendance based on the staff check-ins and check-outs.

As expected, the majority (65.7%) of programs \((n = 35)\) reported using this feature daily (see Figure 33). There was no considerable difference in the number of child care centers and FCCH who reported daily usage (child care centers \(n = 12\), FCCH \(n = 13\)). Other programs reported using the feature with less frequency: 8.6% reported using it weekly, 5.7% reported using it monthly, and 2.9% reported using it once or twice a year. It is possible that there is variability in the frequency of use because some programs have not yet understood the utility of tracking all staff information on Alliance CORE. The remaining six programs (17.1%) reported never using this feature. Of the programs that reported never using the Staff Attendance feature, four were child care centers and two were FCCH. The child care centers each specified different reasons for not using this feature: using another system for tracking staff attendance (a timesheet system), having other staff members who managed staff attendance, not feeling knowledgeable enough to use this feature, and only having one additional employee. The FCCH also explained that they did not use this feature, because they did not have any additional staff at the time the survey was administered.
Similar to the Staff File Management feature (described above), programs with few staff members can still benefit from tracking staff attendance on Alliance CORE. It is possible that programs with few staff members need more information about how the use of these features can be beneficial. In total, 82.9% of programs ($n = 29$) reported that they used this feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

Figure 33. Frequency of Use: Staff Attendance

Updating Method

Of the programs that used the Staff Attendance feature to some extent ($n = 29$), almost all (93.1%) of programs reported that they update this feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 34). Two programs (6.9%) reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there were multiple updates to make.

Figure 34. Updating Method: Staff Attendance

Usefulness

Of the programs that used the Staff Attendance feature to some extent ($n = 29$), almost all (96.6%) reported that it was at least useful: 48.3% selected extremely useful, 27.6% selected very useful, and 20.7% selected useful (see Figure 35). Another 3.4% ($n = 1$) selected somewhat useful. Programs reported that this feature was useful in tracking staff members’ time for payroll and tax purposes, and it helped administrators verify that their program was meeting classroom staff to child ratios. The program that selected somewhat useful is a FCCH and explained that although they had only one staff member, this feature helped them to track hours and prepare documentation for tax purposes.

Figure 35. Usefulness: Staff Attendance
In what ways is the Staff Attendance feature useful for your site?

“Annual tax preparation”

“Capture staff room assignment, time and verify ratios”

“Helps track hours and can give total hours over specific time frames”

“This is how we track and record for correct EHS ratios”

“Use it for payroll every 2 weeks, print staff payroll report. Monitoring ratios, overtime...”

“We used to use time cards and the owner would have to stick all of the times into a system to calculate time. Now we just use the ELV system fully. I know it has saved...a ton of time.”
Below, the individual figures for features for tracking and monitoring information about staff (Staff File Management & Staff Attendance) are presented together for comparison.

Figure 36. Frequency of Use: Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
<th>Quarterly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Attendance</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff File Management</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 37. Updating Method: Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>In a batch</th>
<th>In the moment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Attendance</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff File Management</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 38. Usefulness: Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information about Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
<th>Slightly useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Attendance</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff File Management</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Features for tracking and monitoring information pertaining to families

Parent File Management

Frequency of Use

The Parent File Management feature allows programs to store and organize information about each child’s parents and family members such as the parent handbook agreement, income eligibility forms, proof of residency, and family partnership agreements. This feature is mostly used when children enroll in programs and the information is updated as family information changes (e.g., employment, address, contact numbers, etc.).

The frequency of use of the Parent File Management feature varied widely across programs ($n = 35$; see Figure 39). The variability in frequency of use for this feature may be due to differences in enrollment and family changes across programs. In general, child care centers reported more frequent use of the Parent File Management feature than FCCH - all programs who reported using this feature daily (28.6%) were child care centers. This general pattern is similar to the frequency of use of the Online Enrollment feature (described on p. 31) - centers tend to have a higher enrollment of children and, as a result, may experience more changes in enrollment and family information than FCCH providers. Five (14.3 %) programs (3 child care centers and 2 FCCH) reported using this feature weekly. Eight (22.9%) programs (6 FCCH and 2 child care centers) reported using this feature monthly, three programs (all FCCH) reported using it quarterly, and seven programs (4 FCCH and 3 child care centers) reported using it once or twice a year. Two child care centers (5.7%) reported never using this feature: one specified that managing parent files was another staff member’s role and the other specified that this feature was not useful to them because their program is a “teen parent program.” In total, 94.3% of programs ($n = 33$) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

![Figure 39. Frequency of Use: Parent File Management](image)

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8 ELV partners with several high schools with on-site EHS learning environments, referred to as “teen parent programs.” Teenage parents are enrolled in the high-schools, and their infants and toddlers are enrolled in the on-site EHS learning environments. In teen parent programs, the high school administrators are responsible for managing their students’ files and information, and the EHS program administrators do not keep this information in Alliance CORE.
**Updating Method**

Of the programs that used the Parent File Management feature to some extent \( n = 33 \), the majority (78.8%) reported that they update this feature *in the moment*, or as changes occurred (see Figure 40). Other programs (18.2%) reported updating this feature *in a batch*, or when there were multiple updates to make. One program (3.0%) reported updating this feature in another method, depending on the specific task to be completed.

![Figure 40. Updating Method: Parent File Management](image)

**Usefulness**

Of the programs that used the Parent File Management feature to some extent \( n = 33 \), almost all (97%) reported that this feature was at least useful: 30.3% selected *extremely useful*, 30.3% selected *very useful*, and 36.4% selected *useful* (see Figure 41). Programs reported that the Parent File Management feature is useful in keeping parents’ contact information up-to-date, especially because parents could make updates directly on the system. It also helps administrators to keep information organized in one secure location. Only one program (3.0%), a FCCH who also reported using this feature once or twice a year, reported that the feature was *slightly useful*.

![Figure 41. Usefulness: Parent File Management](image)
In what ways is the Parent File Management feature useful for your site?

“For the most part this has helped us to keep up with where the family lives, parents’ place of employment...We also help the kiddos make birthday cards for parents if they’ve put their birthday in the file.”

“it is helpful to have all of the parent information easily available anywhere”

“It keeps everything organized and I can get information about the parents and keep track of addresses. I can also contact the parents that way”

“...allows parents to easily updates through the computer.”

“Keeping track of who is able to pick up children and to contact when need to”

“Like the child file, the parent file is good to keep everything updated and organized”

“It helps to secure and store data...”

“Quick access to number for emergency use”
Billing Module

Frequency of Use

The Billing Module feature automates the process of billing families for tuition and fees. Programs can customize the use of this feature to meet the billing needs and schedules of their program.

The Billing Module feature was reported as the least frequently used Alliance CORE feature (see Figure 42). The majority of programs (68.6%, \( n = 24 \)) reported that they never use this feature. Of these programs, 11 reported using other systems for billing, such as Quickbooks, Procare, paper billing, or external contractors. These programs explained that the families were already familiar with other systems that were simple for families to use. Four child care centers reported that program billing was managed by others (e.g., school district). Other reasons for not using the Billing Module feature included not feeling knowledgeable enough to use this feature (3 FCCH and 1 child care center), not finding it useful for the program (2 FCCH), not having enough time to use the feature (1 FCCH and 1 child care center), and not requiring direct payment from parents (1 FCCH).

One FCCH (2.9%) reported using the feature once or twice a year, one child care center (2.9%) reported using it monthly, seven programs (20.0%; 5 child care centers and 2 FCCH) reported using it weekly, and two programs (5.7%; 1 child care center and 1 FCCH) reported using it daily. In total, only 31.4% of programs (\( n = 11 \)) reported that they used the feature to at least some extent (at least once or twice a year).

Updating Method

Of the programs that use the Billing Module to some extent (\( n = 11 \)), over half (54.5%) reported that they update the Billing Module feature in the moment, or as changes occur (see Figure 43). Four programs reported updating this feature in a batch, or when there were multiple updates to make. One program reported updating this feature using another method.
Usefulness

Of the programs that used the Billing Module feature to some extent (n = 11), almost all (81.9%) reported that it was at least useful: 45.5% selected extremely useful, 27.3% selected very useful, and 9.1% selected useful (see Figure 44). Another 18.2% selected somewhat useful. Programs reported that the Billing Module feature makes billing easier for parents and for themselves - it enables parents to use credit cards to pay for services and automatically generates bills and tracks collected payments.

In what ways is the Billing Module feature useful for your site?

"It makes billing easier"

"Keeps track of payments collected"

"Love that very little cash is on site"

"Helps generate bills, easy for parents"

"We could only take cash or check before this system. It is a lot easier and faster for parents to pay with a card online. It is also easier for me to see who has and has not paid since I am in the system more than out other system"

"It has been useful to switch from paper to online. The online payments have been extra helpful during this time when cash is not accepted as a form of payment."
Below, the individual figures for features for tracking and monitoring information pertaining to families (Parent File Management & Billing Module) are presented together for comparison.

**Figure 45. Frequency of Use:**
Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information

- **Billing Module:**
  - Never: 5.7%
  - Once or twice a year: 68.6%
  - Quarterly: 2.9%
  - Monthly: 2.9%
  - Weekly: 20.0%
  - Daily: 5.7%

- **Parent File Management:**
  - Never: 20.0%
  - Once or twice a year: 8.6%
  - Quarterly: 22.9%
  - Monthly: 14.3%
  - Weekly: 28.6%
  - Daily: 5.7%

**Figure 46. Updating Method:**
Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information

- **Billing Module:**
  - Other: 9.1%
  - In batch: 36.4%
  - In the moment: 54.5%

- **Parent File Management:**
  - Other: 18.2%
  - In batch: 78.8%
  - In the moment: 1.0%
Figure 47. Usefulness: Features for Tracking and Monitoring Information Pertaining to Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Billing Module</th>
<th>18.2%</th>
<th>9.1%</th>
<th>27.3%</th>
<th>45.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent File Management</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Alliance CORE Features Summary**

The Alliance CORE feature responses provided insight into how programs were using Alliance CORE and their perspective on the usefulness of each feature. Here we provide a summary that includes a description of the features that were used most frequently, those that varied in frequency, and those that were used least frequently. Within the description, we provide potential rationale for the frequency of usage.

Below, the individual figures for all Alliance CORE features are presented together for comparison (in the same order as they were presented above). Figure 48 depicts the frequency of use for all 10 Alliance CORE features. Figure 49 depicts the updating method for all 10 Alliance CORE features. Lastly, Figure 50 depicts the usefulness for all 10 Alliance CORE features.

![Figure 48. Frequency of Use: All Alliance CORE Features](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billing Module</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent File Management</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Attendance</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff File Management</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACFP Tracking &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCAP Attendance</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Attendance</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child File Management</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Enrollment</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Primary Information</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Legend: Never, Once or twice a year, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly, Daily*
Features that track and monitor information about children (e.g., Child File Management, Child Attendance, and CCCAP Attendance) were most frequently used. These features contain functionalities that are important for the day-to-day operations of child care programs, and they are especially important for managing reimbursements to the program. The high-frequency use of these features aligns with their expected use, and the majority of programs reported that they update all of these features as changes occur. The Child File Management feature is used by programs to track and organize information about all of the children in their care, including classroom assignments and screening information. Parents can easily check children in and out of care using the Child Attendance feature, and Alliance CORE securely stores the daily attendance data for each program. Programs verify children’s daily attendance, and as they do so, Alliance CORE uses the CCCAP Attendance feature to send information directly to the state CCCAP system. This ensures that programs can receive the correct amount of reimbursement for each CCCAP-enrolled child in their care. Due to the importance of tracking and monitoring information about children for day-to-day operation, child care centers and FCCHs found these features to be among the most useful.

The Staff Attendance feature was also one of the most frequently used features. Similar to the Child Attendance feature, the Staff Attendance feature allows for staff members to quickly check in and out of work every day, and it securely stores their attendance and hours of work in the Alliance CORE system. Programs can use this information to monitor staff-to-child ratios and to prepare payroll and tax information. Tracking staff attendance effectively supports programs in completing several administrative tasks and may be the reason programs found this feature one of the most useful.

The frequency of use varied widely for the following features: Provider Primary Information, Schedule, and Room Set Up; Online Enrollment; Staff File Management; and Parent File Management. The variability in frequency of use for these features aligned with their expected use. These features are used for administrative processes that may occur at varying rates according to program characteristics or need. This may be why the majority of programs reported that they update the information in these features as changes occur. Typically, the information in these features is entered at specific points in the school year. Programs are expected to update the Provider Primary Information, Schedule and Room Set Up at the beginning of each school year. Programs are expected to use the Online Enrollment and Parent File Management features during recruitment and enrollment periods. Finally, programs are expected to use the Staff File Management feature when hiring and onboarding new staff. All of these features are also updated as changes occur, and the number and frequency of these changes can vary widely across different programs.
In general, child care centers used these features more frequently than FCCHs. As child care centers tend to be larger than FCCHs, with larger numbers of children, families, and staff, we can expect centers to experience more changes in enrollment, classroom set-ups, and staff information throughout the school year. The number of staff members had the largest impact on the use and usefulness of the Staff File Management feature. FCCHs did not use this feature as frequently or find this feature as useful as centers, and several FCCHs explained that they only had one or two staff members. It may be that programs with smaller staff teams can keep their staff information organized using other systems (e.g., keeping paper documentation) and do not find it necessary to use an electronic system for keeping records updated for a small number of staff. However, these features were also considered generally useful by programs that used the features, especially for licensing inspections and record-keeping purposes.

The least frequently used Alliance CORE features were the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature and the Billing Module feature. The most common reason for not using these features was having another system in place to fulfill these functions. Over a third of programs never used the CACFP Tracking and Reporting feature, and most of these were FCCH. Typically, FCCH programs partner with a sponsor to participate in the CACFP, and they are required by their sponsors to input information directly into the system that their sponsor chooses. However, FCCHs can still use the report generated by Alliance CORE to submit the information if they choose. Centers use this report to efficiently and accurately collect reimbursements for meals distributed to the children in their care. Programs that did use this feature generally found it to be useful, like other Alliance CORE features.

The majority of programs reported never using the Billing Module feature. Most programs who did not use the Billing Module feature explained that the systems they do have in place, such as different softwares (e.g., Quickbooks), paper documenting, and external contractors, have been working well for their programs. Several programs also explained that their families are more comfortable using other systems for payment, including cash payments, than using Alliance CORE. This demonstrates that most programs that are not using the Billing Module feature are doing so in an effort to be responsive to the needs of their families. Other reasons for not using the Billing Module feature included not knowing enough about the feature and not requiring direct payment from parents. The majority of programs that do use this feature reported using it weekly, and generally found it to be useful to make billing efficient and track payments accurately.
To examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE, we aggregated programs’ frequency of use responses and calculated two distinct scores for each program: 1) a composite Frequency Total Score and 2) a composite Usefulness Total Score. We also aggregated the total number of specific benefits reported by each program. Below are the descriptive statistics of the composite frequency and usefulness total scores. The descriptive statistics for the benefits total were already examined on pages 16-23.

Frequency Total Score.
Programs’ responses to “How often do you use this feature?” were re-coded to assign numerical values to each response (Never = 0; once or twice a year = 1; quarterly = 2; monthly = 3; weekly = 4; or daily = 5). The numerical values were aggregated across all Alliance CORE features. Possible frequency total scores range from 0 (selecting never for 11 features) to 55 (selecting daily for 11 features).

The average frequency total score for all programs was 32.8, ranging between 10 - 51 (see Figure 51). Analyses demonstrated that frequency total scores were higher for center administrators (n = 21) than for FCCH providers (n = 15). Child care centers’ average frequency total score was 35.1, ranging between 17 - 51. FCCHs’ average frequency total score was 29.7, ranging between 10 - 47. This suggests that center administrators used Alliance CORE more frequently than FCCH providers. It’s important to note that more frequent use of Alliance CORE does not necessarily mean better use. There may be multiple reasons for programs using Alliance CORE more frequently. As previously discussed, centers tend to be larger programs than FCCHs, and centers may experience more frequent changes throughout the school year.

Understanding the usage of specific features provides further insight of how programs are utilizing specific aspects of Alliance CORE. The most frequently used were the Child Tracking and Monitoring features and the Staff Attendance feature, which were features that were tracking information that was imperative for the day to day functioning of programs. The least frequently used were the CACFP and Billing Module features, which were features that programs were already utilizing other systems to address the program needs.

Aim 4: To examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE

To examine the association between frequency of use, usefulness, and perceived benefits of Alliance CORE, we aggregated programs’ frequency of use and usefulness responses and calculated two distinct scores for each program: 1) a composite Frequency Total Score and 2) a composite Usefulness Total Score. We also aggregated the total number of specific benefits reported by each program. Below are the descriptive statistics of the composite frequency and usefulness total scores. The descriptive statistics for the benefits total were already examined on pages 16-23.

Frequency Total Score.
Programs’ responses to “How often do you use this feature?” were re-coded to assign numerical values to each response (Never = 0; once or twice a year = 1; quarterly = 2; monthly = 3; weekly = 4; or daily = 5). The numerical values were aggregated across all Alliance CORE features. Possible frequency total scores range from 0 (selecting never for 11 features) to 55 (selecting daily for 11 features).

The average frequency total score for all programs was 32.8, ranging between 10 - 51 (see Figure 51). Analyses demonstrated that frequency total scores were higher for center administrators (n = 21) than for FCCH providers (n = 15). Child care centers’ average frequency total score was 35.1, ranging between 17 - 51. FCCHs’ average frequency total score was 29.7, ranging between 10 - 47. This suggests that center administrators used Alliance CORE more frequently than FCCH providers. It’s important to note that more frequent use of Alliance CORE does not necessarily mean better use. There may be multiple reasons for programs using Alliance CORE more frequently. As previously discussed, centers tend to be larger programs than FCCHs, and centers may experience more frequent changes throughout the school year.

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10 Alliance CORE total scores analyses include the Health and Safety Checks Documentation feature in the aggregated scores. This feature is otherwise excluded from this report. The feature and its functionality were not well-defined when submitted for inclusion in the survey. In reviewing survey responses, ELV determined that program administrators were thinking of a different feature rather than the feature ELV initially intended to capture.
Usefulness Total Score.

Programs’ responses to “To what extent do you find this feature useful?” were re-coded to assign numerical values to each response (Not at all useful = 0; slightly useful = 1; somewhat useful = 2; useful = 3; very useful = 4; extremely useful = 5). The numerical values were aggregated across the 11 Alliance CORE features. Possible usefulness total scores range from 0 (selecting not at all useful for 11 features) to 55 (selecting extremely useful for 11 features).

The average usefulness total score for all programs was 34.7, ranging between 8 - 53 (see Figure 52). Analyses demonstrated that usefulness total scores were slightly higher for FCCHs ($n = 15$) than for child care centers ($n = 21$). FCCHs average usefulness total score was 35.6, ranging between 14 - 53. Child care centers’ average usefulness total score was 34.1, ranging between 8 - 49. This suggests that FCCHs found Alliance CORE slightly more useful than did child care centers. This may be attributable to the comparison between Alliance CORE and the systems that FCCHs were using prior to Alliance CORE. The majority FCCHs (approximately 73%) reported using a paper system prior to Alliance CORE. Shifting to Alliance CORE would cause a drastic change in the day-to-day operations of FCCHs, and they may have perceived its usefulness more pointedly than center administrators.
We conducted correlational analyses to understand how the frequency with which administrators used Alliance CORE was associated with administrators’ reports of Alliance CORE’s usefulness and benefits.

**Frequency Total Score and Usefulness Total Score.**

We conducted correlational analyses to determine if there was a relationship between how frequently program administrators used Alliance CORE features and how useful they reported Alliance CORE to be. We used the program’s frequency total scores and usefulness total scores to conduct these analyses.

Correlational analyses demonstrated a significant positive association between frequency total scores and usefulness total scores. The more frequently programs used Alliance CORE, the higher their usefulness total score. This suggests that programs that used Alliance CORE more often also rated Alliance CORE features as more useful.

**Frequency Total Score and Benefits Endorsement.**

We conducted correlational analyses to determine if there was a relationship between how frequently program administrators used Alliance CORE and how many specific Alliance CORE benefits programs identified. We used programs’ frequency total scores and the number of specific Alliance CORE benefits identified for these analyses.
Correlational analyses demonstrated a significant positive association between frequency total scores and specific benefits endorsed. The more frequently programs used Alliance CORE, the more benefits they identified. This suggests that programs that used Alliance CORE more often also reported experiencing more benefits from using Alliance CORE.

**Usefulness Total Score and Benefits Endorsement.**
We conducted correlational analyses to determine if there was a relationship between how useful programs reported Alliance CORE to be and how many specific Alliance CORE benefits programs endorsed. We used programs’ usefulness total scores and the number of specific Alliance CORE benefits identified for these analyses.

Correlational analyses demonstrated a significant positive association between usefulness total scores and specific benefits endorsed (see Table 10). The more useful that programs rated Alliance CORE, the more benefits they identified. This suggests that programs that rated Alliance CORE as being more useful also reported experiencing more benefits from using Alliance CORE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EHS-CCP Start Years</th>
<th>Benefit Endorsement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Total Score</td>
<td>.787**</td>
<td>.343*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness Total Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.319*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p > .01, * p > .05
Aim 5: To examine the association between Alliance CORE usage and benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality

To examine the association between Alliance CORE usage and benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality, we conducted bivariate correlations between teacher-child interaction quality gains and the total scores for usefulness and perceived benefits. We conducted bivariate correlations using the Benefit Endorsement, Frequency, and Usefulness totals scores with CLASS scores.

To understand the association between Alliance CORE and teacher-child interaction quality, we conducted correlational analyses using the Benefit Endorsement, Frequency Total Score, Usefulness Total Score, and from the Alliance CORE Usage Survey (discussed on pages 13, 56, and 57 respectively) and CLASS observations collected by independent observers and ELV EHS-CCP staff and community partners.

CLASS. The CLASS - Toddler observational tool is made up of two domains: Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS) and Engaged Support for Learning (ESL). Each domain is scored separately, and scores are aggregated across multiple observation cycles conducted in one morning. Scores are on a seven-point scale, with higher scores representing higher-quality interactions.

**EBS.** The Emotional and Behavioral Support domain focuses on teachers’ behaviors that help children develop warm and supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, experience appropriate levels of independence, develop behavioral regulation, meet behavioral expectations, and fully participate in classroom activities.

**ESL.** The Engaged Support for Learning domain focuses on teachers’ facilitation of activities that enhance children’s thinking and reasoning skills, encourage persistence, attention, and motivation, and stimulate children’s understanding and use of language.

**Alliance CORE Usage Survey and CLASS**

For programs that completed the Alliance CORE Usage Survey, we compared programs’ first year CLASS scores to their most recent CLASS scores. For each analysis, programs were divided into 2 groups based on their improvement in CLASS scores: 1) programs that improved at least a quarter of a point, and 2) programs that did not improve by at least one quarter of a point. The number of programs in each comparison group are described in Table 11.

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Due to COVID-19 pandemic, observations conducted during the 2019-2020 school year were excluded from this analyses.
Table 11. ELV EHS-CCP CLASS Score Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved by .25 or greater</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not improve by .25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved by .25 or greater</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not improve by .25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency Total Score and CLASS**
For programs in which teacher-child interaction quality improved, correlational analyses demonstrated positive associations between Alliance CORE frequency total scores and programs’ CLASS score improvement. Additionally, frequency total scores were higher in programs with improved teacher-child interaction quality. Administrators that used Alliance CORE more frequently are in programs with higher classroom quality.

**Usefulness Total Score and CLASS**
For programs in which teacher-child interaction quality improved, correlational analyses also demonstrated positive associations between Alliance CORE usefulness total scores and programs’ CLASS score improvement. Additionally, usefulness total scores were higher in programs with improved teacher-child interaction quality. Administrators who reported Alliance CORE as more useful are in programs with higher quality teacher-child interactions.
ELV developed the Alliance CORE cloud-based child care management system to help child care programs streamline their administrative processes. Alliance CORE helps program administrators document and monitor information about the programs’ children, families, and staff in a secure and efficient manner. This allows program administrators to spend more time and effort focusing on quality improvement that impacts the children and families in their care.

This evaluation focused on understanding ELV EHS-CCP programs’ knowledge and use of Alliance CORE over time, the extent to which administrators perceived Alliance CORE to be beneficial, the use and usefulness of several Alliance CORE features, the association between use of Alliance CORE and perceived benefits, and the association between Alliance CORE usage and benefits with improved teacher-child interaction quality. Administrators became quite knowledgeable in using Alliance CORE, and most administrators use Alliance CORE more and more each year. ELV supports their EHS-CCP programs in using Alliance CORE by providing onboarding training and individualized continuous technical support, which likely contributed to administrators’ increased familiarity with the system. Programs’ increased knowledge and use of Alliance CORE led to substantial changes in the ways they manage their programs and monitor their information. Program administrators reported these changes were beneficial, and Alliance CORE provided them with an integrated and efficient system that has saved them a lot of time, energy and effort. Thanks to this, programs can focus on quality improvement, including their state QRIS Colorado Shines ratings.

Using Alliance CORE has helped administrators with many aspects of their programs that are crucial to their delivery of high-quality services and care, including family engagement, teacher-child interactions, monitoring health and safety, licensing inspections, and finances. The Alliance CORE features programs used the most are those that help document and monitor information about children, children’s attendance, and staff’s attendance. These features not only connect to other Alliance CORE functionalities, but also help programs efficiently manage reimbursements and payroll. Most program administrators reported that Alliance CORE features are highly useful, and further analyses demonstrated that administrators who used Alliance CORE more often also rated them as more useful and reported experiencing more benefits. Programs that used Alliance CORE more frequently and found it more useful have higher classroom quality. Most notably, significant improvements in teacher-child interaction quality were predicted by Alliance CORE frequency of use and reported usefulness. In other words, in programs that used Alliance CORE more frequently, for example, teacher-child interaction quality significantly increased.

CONCLUSION
This supports administrators’ belief that the time, energy, and effort saved by using Alliance CORE can be refocused to making improvements in the quality of program services and in the quality of interactions that children experience.

This evaluation has helped provide insight into how ELV EHS-CCP programs are using Alliance CORE, how useful program administrators find Alliance CORE, and how Alliance CORE is associated with improvements in classroom quality. Future evaluations should aim to measure key outcomes to understand the comprehensive impact that Alliance CORE has had on program quality and effectiveness. Alliance CORE makes many administrative processes more efficient and allows administrators to focus their efforts and resources on improving the quality of services that children, families, and staff receive.
To understand programs’ knowledge and general use of Alliance CORE, we asked programs to describe their use of the Alliance CORE Support Ticket feature. The question is in quotations and the response options are in italics below.

“How often do you use the ‘support ticket’ feature to submit feedback when you run into an issue on the AllianceCORE website?”

- I did not know this feature existed
- I never use it
- I rarely use it
- I sometimes use it
- I always use it

Participating programs were asked how often they used the Support Ticket feature when they encountered an issue on Alliance CORE. Programs’ use of the Support Ticket feature varied widely: 8.3% of programs reported not knowing this feature existed, 11.1% reported never using it, 44.4% reported rarely using it, 25.0% reported sometimes using it, and 11.1% reported always using it (see Figure 53).
Table 11. ELV EHS-CCP CLASS Score Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>FCCH</th>
<th>Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensing inspections run more smoothly.</td>
<td>93.30%</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy to monitor our program’s quality improvement by using the Continuous Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>86.70%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a centralized system for entering and tracking data saves time.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>90.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining updated contact information for families helps us be confident that we can reach them when needed.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier and quicker to complete CCAP billing.</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance CORE makes it easy to track health and safety in our program.</td>
<td>73.30%</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family engagement/communication with families has increased.</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our team is able to dedicate more time to interactions with children.</td>
<td>53.30%</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with specific families and staff members is easier and faster.</td>
<td>46.70%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Alliance CORE saves us money (admin time cost, compared to other software, resource platform discounts, etc.).</td>
<td>46.70%</td>
<td>52.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We know when children are absent and can conduct welfare check-ins.</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can ensure that teachers are engaging in ongoing professional development.</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re better able to maintain and monitor teacher:child ratios.</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our program has a higher level of income from CCAP due to accurate and complete data.</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>52.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s faster and easier to collect payment from families.</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We use the system to better plan for time off.</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier and quicker to complete CACFP billing.</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our program has a higher level of income from CACFP due to accurate and complete data.</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>42.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re able to make more informed decisions about staffing patterns.</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our program has a higher level of income from using the billing module.</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher retention has increased.</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>