

# Equitable compensation for the child care workforce: Within reach and worth the investment <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Sharrock, E., & Parkerson, C.

**Source:** Bank Street College of Education

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 27 Oct 2020

## AVAILABILITY

Access full PDF online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

For too long the question of equitable compensation and benefits has been the obvious, but elusive lever to sustainably improving the quality of child care in this country. Pay and benefit parity between early childhood and elementary school educators is critical to reducing turnover, improving job quality, and achieving a more equitable child care system. However, given the gap between current and fair, equitable compensation, it often seems like a fantasy. We have been afraid to talk about what it might cost. The result: incremental policy change that continues to shortchange our youngest learners and their caregivers. Bank Street's cost modeling estimates that pay parity, including comprehensive benefits for all birth-to-three educators nationwide, would cost \$40.2 billion per year. To put this investment in context, we spend \$591 billion on compensation and benefits for K-12 public school teachers.

Due to a gross underinvestment of public resources, less than 10 percent of child care programs are considered high quality. Half of the child care workforce relies on public assistance, 86 percent make less than \$15 per hour, and only 15 percent receive employer-sponsored health insurance. This is a workforce made up almost entirely of women, 40 percent of whom are people of color.<sup>8</sup> As a comparison, K-12 teacher salaries average \$59,420 and include comprehensive benefits packages. Eighty-four percent of the K-12 workforce is White. These trends are even more significant when we examine wage disparities within the field. Nationally, on average, Black female educators working full time in settings that serve children ages 0-5 make 84 cents for every \$1 earned by their White counterparts. While some states have made progress increasing the compensation of pre-K teachers through increased public funding, those working in child care settings are almost universally left behind because parents are expected to shoulder much of the cost of child care. Already families pay more in monthly child care fees than their mortgages in 35 States. As the Alliance for Early Success writes in their recently released roadmap to transform the child care sector, "instead of allocating adequate public funding for child care and providing it as a public good to all families, we have decided to run this system on the backs of families and educators, especially economically vulnerable women, and women of color."

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** workforce <sup>[4]</sup>

wages <sup>[5]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 4 Nov 2020):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/11/equitable-compensation-child-care-workforce-within-reach>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/11/equitable-compensation-child-care-workforce-within-reach> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://educate.bankstreet.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=bsec> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/wages>