

Identifying primary and secondary stressors, buffers, and supports that impact ECE teacher wellbeing: implications for teacher education ^[1]

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Excerpted from Abstract

Stress has been shown to negatively impact early childhood teachers' abilities to provide high quality, responsive environments for young children. Previous studies of early childhood teacher stress have focused on the tasks and responsibilities inherent in the job as well as on structural conditions within the field of early childhood education. The present study explored inter- and intra-personal dimensions of early childhood teacher stress and applied the Stress Process model to teachers' experience of work-related stress. Results from this qualitative study suggest that teachers experience primary stressors associated with the work itself and interactions with others within the workplace. They also experience secondary stressors when their work interferes with other domains of their lives. Despite these stressors, teachers have developed a variety of coping strategies and created networks of social support to buffer the impact of stressors on their practice. These findings use teachers' own experiences to inform the types of pre-service training, professional development, and policy interventions that have the greatest potential to reduce ECE teacher stress and enable them to provide the highest quality early care and education for all children.

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