

# Worthy work, STILL unlivable wages: The childhood workforce 25 years after the National Child Care Staffing Study <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Centre for the Study of Child Care Employment

**Format:** Report

**Publication Date:** 18 Nov 2014

## AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

Report release and panel presentation webcast online <sup>[3]</sup>

## Description:

"Good quality care requires an environment that values adults as well as children."  
- National Child Care Staffing Study, 1989

The National Child Care Staffing Study (NCCSS) released in 1989, brought national attention for the first time to poverty-level wages and high turnover among early childhood teaching staff, and to the adverse consequences for children. In the succeeding 25 years, combined developments in science, practice, and policy have dramatically shifted the context for discussions about the status of early childhood teaching jobs, and the importance of attracting and retaining a well-prepared workforce that is capable of promoting young children's learning, health and development.

Today, the explosion of knowledge about what is at stake when early childhood development goes awry has coincided with powerful economic arguments for investments in high-quality early care and education. New evidence about the ways in which stress and economic insecurity challenge teachers' capacity to provide developmentally supportive care and education is lending scientific support to the claim that child well-being depends on adult well-being not only at home but in out-of-home settings. And, serious debate at the federal level, echoed in virtually every state, is underway about the vital importance of improving the quality of early education, and the most productive strategies for ensuring that young children's critical early experiences will promote, not undermine, their lifelong learning and healthy development.

Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages compiles evidence from multiple sources to provide a portrait of the early childhood teaching workforce today in comparison to 25 years ago. The need to rely on a variety of data sources to obtain this portrait reveals the absence of a comprehensive, regularly updated database on the status and characteristics of the early childhood workforce. In addition to examining trends in center-based teachers' education, wages and turnover, the report includes new evidence examining economic insecurity and use of public benefits among this predominantly female, ethnically diverse workforce. The report also appraises state and national efforts to improve early childhood teaching jobs, and offers recommendations aimed at reinvigorating a national conversation about the status and working conditions of the more than two million teaching staff who work in our nation's early care and education settings.

**Related link:** Parents' child-care costs have doubled. But teachers still earn poverty wages. <sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** United States <sup>[5]</sup>

**Tags:** poverty <sup>[6]</sup>

quality <sup>[7]</sup>

funding <sup>[8]</sup>

staff <sup>[9]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/14/11/worthy-work-still-unlivable-wages-childhood-workforce-25>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/14/11/worthy-work-still-unlivable-wages-childhood-workforce-25>

[2] <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2014/ReportFINAL.pdf>

[3] <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/events/worthy-work-still-unlivable-wages/>

[4] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/11/18/parents-child-care-costs-have-doubled-but-teachers-still-earn-poverty-wages/>

[5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865>

[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty>

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[8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding>

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