

The Early Childhood Workforce Index^[1]

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Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

Format: Report

Publication Date: 7 Jul 2016

AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF^[2]

Executive summary PDF^[3]

Executive summary

Every day, in homes and centers across the country, approximately two million adults are paid to care for and educate more than 12 million children between birth and age five. Regardless of setting or role, this almost exclusively female workforce is responsible for safeguarding and facilitating the development and learning of our nation's youngest children.

Early educators play a central role in the environments in which millions of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers develop and learn. Our nation relies on their knowledge and skills to provide high-quality early care and education to our increasingly diverse population of children and families. Yet our system of preparing, supporting, and rewarding early educators in the United States remains largely ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable, posing multiple obstacles to teachers' efforts to nurture children's optimal development and learning, as well as risks to their own well-being.

CSCCE's 2014 report, *Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Care and Education Workforce 25 Years after the National Child Care Staffing Study*, documented that economic insecurity, linked to low wages, remains endemic among those who care for and educate young children from birth to elementary school. This condition has endured despite a much-altered landscape in which developmental scientists, economists, and business and labor leaders have widely recognized the importance of early care and education in shaping children's development, promoting the health of families, and building a strong economy.

In line with this increased recognition of the importance of ECE, there have been notable, but uneven, strides in improving the education and training levels of the ECE workforce over the last quarter century. But efforts to link these improvements to policies and resources that address teachers' economic well-being have been largely optional, selective, and sporadic. They have not translated evenly to federal policy or funding priorities across programs, nor have they necessarily prompted state actions. A major goal of early childhood services has been to relieve poverty among children, yet many of these same efforts continue to generate poverty in the predominantly female, ethnically and racially diverse ECE workforce, especially for educators who have children of their own.

Region: United States^[4]

Tags: wages^[5]

childcare workforce^[6]

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