

Better Compensation: The Key to an Educated and Committed Early Childhood Workforce

Did you know that..

- **There is a direct relationship between the qualifications of early childhood teachers, compensation and the quality of their classrooms?**

There is strong significant evidence of a positive correlation between teacher qualifications and quality with respect to the learning environment for all young children in early childhood education and care settings, including infants and toddlers. A large international meta-analysis suggests if we require educated, qualified teachers we will see significant improvements for quality within center-based and home-based settings.¹ The qualifications, compensation and retention of early childhood teachers are the primary indicators of quality in an early care and education program.² Early childhood professionals receiving higher compensation provide higher quality care.³

- **Many early childhood teachers already have credentials and degrees?**

The National Survey of Early Care and Education found a majority (53%) of center-based and almost a third (30%) of home-based teachers and caregivers reported having college degrees, and almost a third of those reported BA or graduate/professional degrees.⁴

- **The biggest barrier for quality in child care programs is the level of compensation for the teachers?**

81% of early childhood educators surveyed agree that any major effort to increase the quality of early childhood education programs will fail unless early educators received increased salaries and benefits.⁵

- **The lowest paid profession in our country is the child care workforce?**

Child care workers are in the 2nd percentile (nearly at the bottom) when all occupations are ranked by annual wages, earning \$9.77 per hour.⁶ They earn less than half the hourly wage of teachers of elementary-aged children, often with the same credentials.⁷ Administrators of programs for young children typically earn less than 60% of what administrators of programs for elementary-aged children earn.⁸

- **The lifetime earnings of child care teachers with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education will be less than a graduate with any other major?**

Unlike other professions, a child care teacher with an early childhood education degree is unlikely to be paid significantly more than her co-teachers without degrees. A bachelor's degree in early childhood education occupies the dubious distinction of the college major with the lowest projected lifetime earnings.⁹

- **When a child's brain is experiencing the most growth, their teachers are being paid the least?**

Infant-toddler teachers are paid less than teachers working with preschool-age children. Teachers with a bachelor's degree working with infants and toddlers are paid at rates similar to teachers working with children age three and older with associate degrees. Only 25% of infant and toddler teachers with bachelor's or higher degrees earned \$15 or more per hour, while half of those working with older children earned at least \$15.50 per hour.¹⁰

- **Nearly half of the child care workforce is on public assistance?**

Almost one half (46%) of child care workers, compared to 26% of the U.S. workforce as a whole, are part of families enrolled in at least one of four public support programs (EITC, Medicaid and CHIP, SNAP, and/or TANF).¹¹ In every state, the average/median wage for a child care teacher was below the eligibility cut-off for SNAP.¹²

¹ Manning M, Garvis S, Fleming C, Wong T.W. G. The relationship between teacher qualification and the quality of the early childhood care and learning environment. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2017:1 DOI: 10.4073/csr.2017.1

² Economic Policy Institute, 2016. It's time for an ambitious national investment in America's children. Bivens, J; Garcia, E; Gould, E; Weiss, E; and Wilson, V.

³ Center of Children, Families, and the Law. 2005. Compensation of Early Childhood teachers: What value do we place on young children?

⁴ National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team. (2013). Number and Characteristics of Early Care and Education (ECE) Teachers and Caregivers: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). OPRE Report #2013-38, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. EYC, 2016. Growing the Demand for Quality.

⁵ NAEYC 2016. Growing the Demand for Quality.

⁶ Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, 2015

⁷ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016. Early Childhood Workforce Index.

⁸ U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2015, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March EDUCATION POLICY: A Tale of Two Pre-K Leaders 35 30, 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2015/may/oes119031.htm>. (Tale of Two PreK leaders, New America)

⁹ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016. Early Childhood Workforce Index. Hershbein, B., & Kearney, M.S. (2014). Major Decisions: What Graduates Earn Over Their Lifetimes. Retrieved from http://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/major_decisions_what_graduates_earn_over_their_lifetimes/

¹⁰ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016. Early Childhood Workforce Index. University of California, Berkeley.

¹¹ UC Berkeley Labor Center calculations from 2009-2013. March Current Population Survey (CPS) 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS).

¹² ACF, July 2016. A Rising Tide of Attention to the Early Childhood Workforce: Releasing the Early Childhood Career Pathways Statement. U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1 Year data (2014); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2015); Head Start Program Information Report (2015).



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