



2019
North Carolina
Early Care and Education
Workforce Study:

General Workforce Characteristics

November, 2020

IN BRIEF:

The Early Care and Education (ECE) workforce plays a critical role throughout North Carolina in promoting the healthy development of young children and also providing an important work support for parents.

The ECE workforce is aging. Even pre-COVID, economic challenges were widespread. Solutions are needed to retain and grow a high-quality workforce to impact child development and economic recovery for parents returning to work.

In 2019, Child Care Services Association (CCSA) conducted a statewide early care and education workforce study. The results of the study related to characteristics of the ECE workforce are discussed in this brief. The full **2019 North Carolina Early Childhood Workforce Study** is located on CCSA's [website](#).



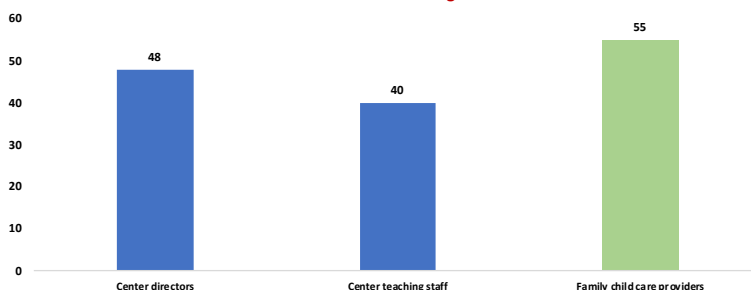
Key Findings



ECE Workforce Age

The ECE workforce is aging, particularly family child care providers.

2019 Early Care & Education Workforce
Median Years of Age

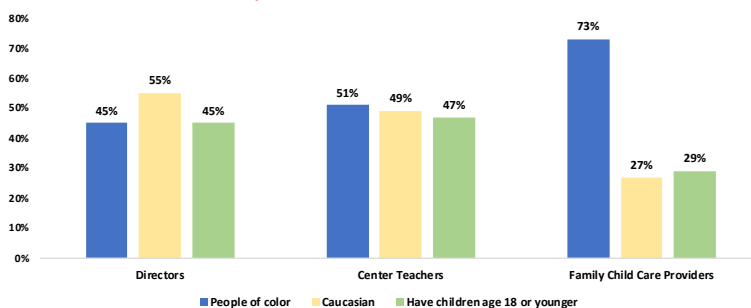


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

ECE Workforce Characteristics

The workforce is diverse and many are raising children of their own.

2019 Early Care & Education Workforce Characteristics

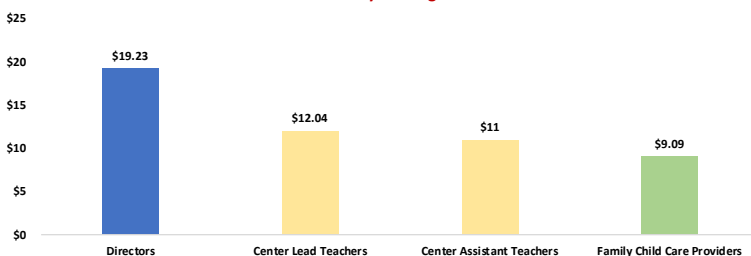


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

ECE Workforce Median Hourly Earnings

Wages are low, which makes hiring and job retention difficult.

2019 Early Care & Education Workforce
Hourly Earnings

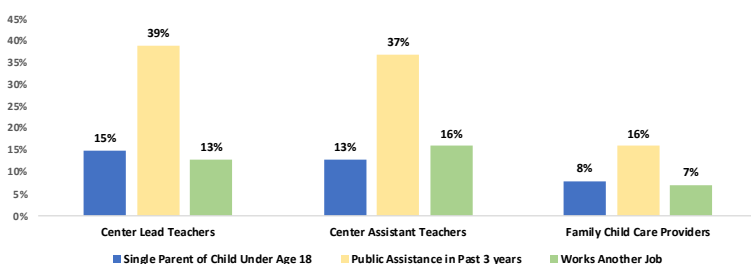


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

ECE Workforce Economic Well-Being

Some individuals are single parents (with no other income), some are working two jobs and many have received public aid in the past 3 years (such as Medicaid or SNAP).

2019 Early Care & Education Workforce
Economic Well-Being

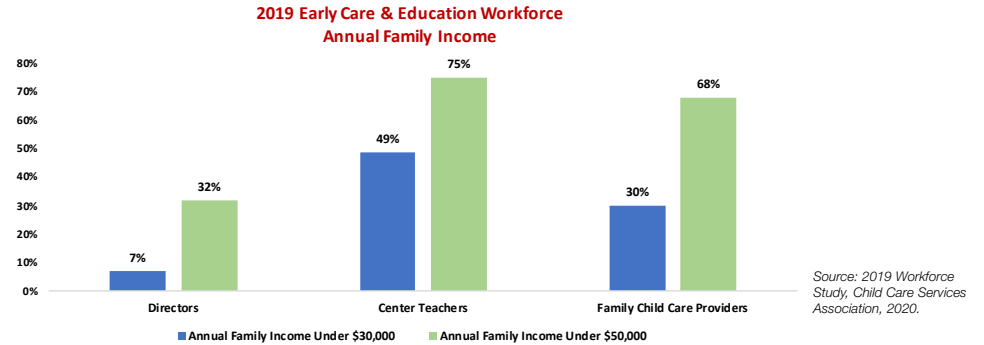


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.



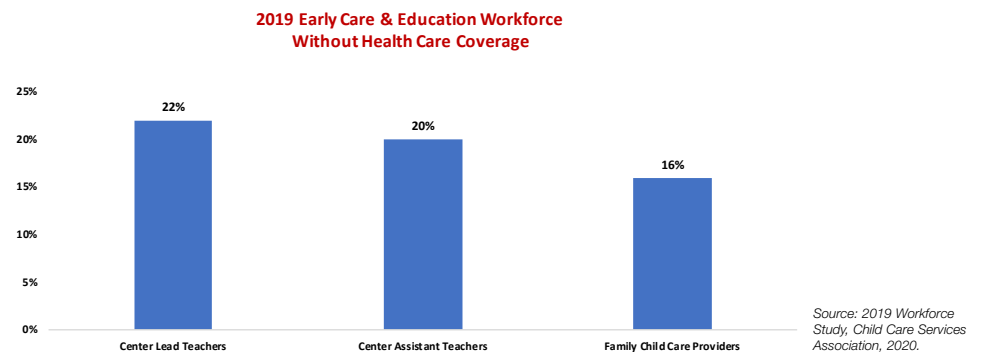
ECE Workforce Annual Median Income

Even though some work two jobs, many struggle to support their households.



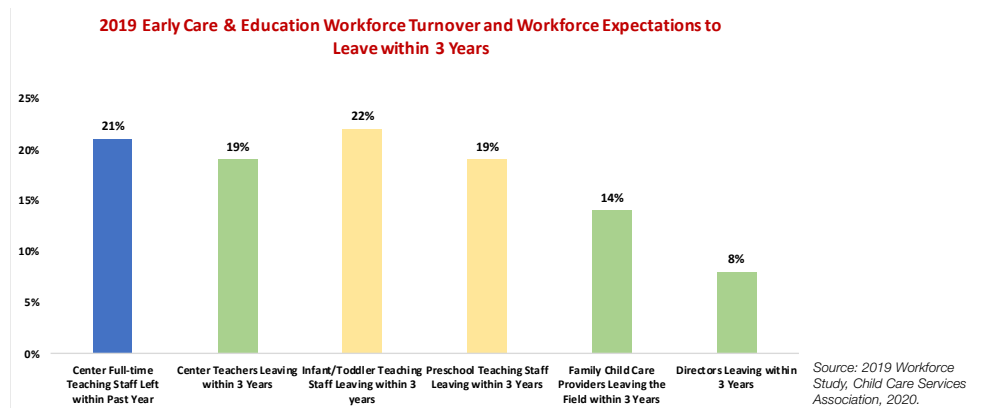
ECE Workforce Access to Health Coverage

Child care workers are on the frontline in supporting children and working families. Yet, our country faces a public health pandemic with COVID-19 and many in the ECE workforce have no health care coverage.



ECE Workforce Turnover

With low pay and few employee benefits, turnover is high and a significant percentage expect to leave the field within the next three years.



ECE Workforce Characteristics by County

Across the state, workforce characteristics vary greatly by county. Specific information related to each county is available on CCSA's [website](#).

Recommendations


DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There has been remarkable progress in some areas related to the Early Care and Education workforce. For example, the number and percentage of individuals attaining higher education degrees such as an Associate or Bachelor's degree and certifications such as the NC early childhood credential and the infant/toddler certificate has grown significantly over the years. However, pay and benefits such as health care coverage remain insufficient to significantly reduce turnover and improve the economic well-being of the workforce. Disproportionately, this impacts people of color.

With COVID-19, there is an opportunity to rethink the value of and support for the early care and education workforce. They are the workforce that supports all other workforces. They are the workforce that builds our workforce of tomorrow. When asked what would keep them in the ECE field, 81% say better pay and more than half say better benefits. Strategies to better support the ECE workforce are needed—not only to retain and strengthen the current workforce but also to grow the aging field. It takes time to build a pipeline of qualified teachers. Therefore, starting now before a wave of retirements occurs is common sense.

These are challenges with solutions. North Carolina has long been a leader in the early childhood space. It's time to review our lessons learned and support the ECE workforce in a manner that recognizes the important work that they do.




RECOMMENDATIONS





1. Implement a salary scale tied to certifications, levels of education and experience that supplements ECE workforce pay for individuals working in private sector child care programs (including family child care homes) through a dedicated revenue stream.
2. Consider strategies to increase access to employee benefits in private sector child care programs.
3. Increase funding for WAGE\$, AWARD\$ and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships to increase earnings of the ECE workforce and to expand access to higher education coursework.
4. Develop incentives for potential new family child care providers to enter and stay in the field. 



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