



2019
North Carolina
Early Care and Education
Workforce Study:

ECE Child Care Center Compensation

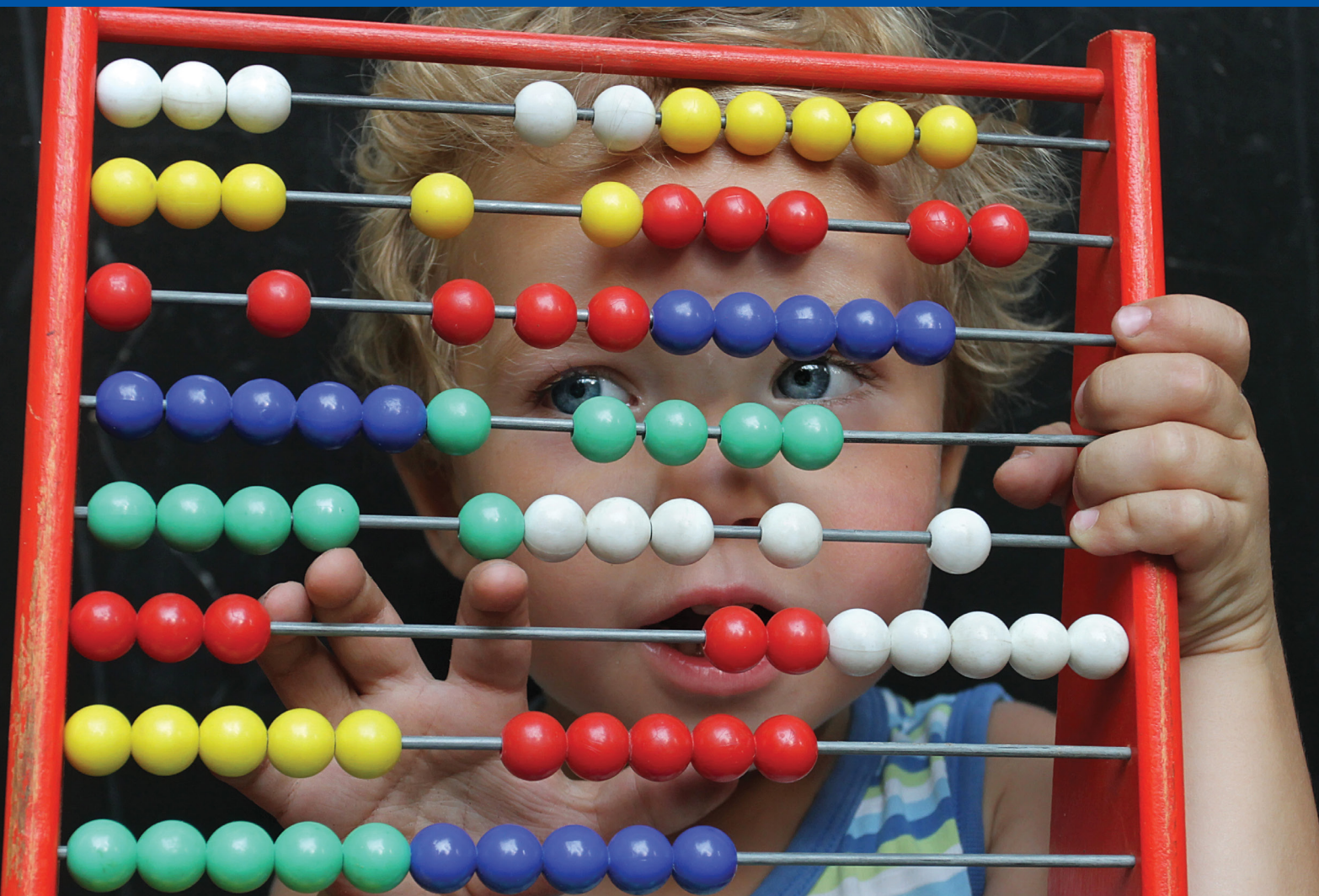
November, 2020

IN BRIEF:

Access to high-quality child care makes a difference in the lives of young children. High-quality early care and education (ECE) programs are not possible without high-quality staff—a workforce with the education and competencies to promote healthy child development AND that receives compensation to reward them for the important work that they do.

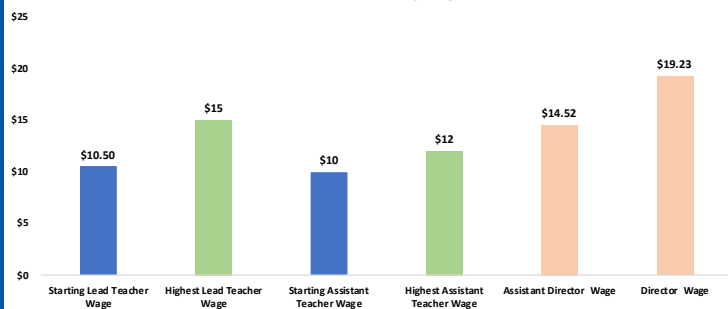
Compensation (earnings and benefits) impacts program quality because it affects the ability to hire and retain high-quality staff.

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



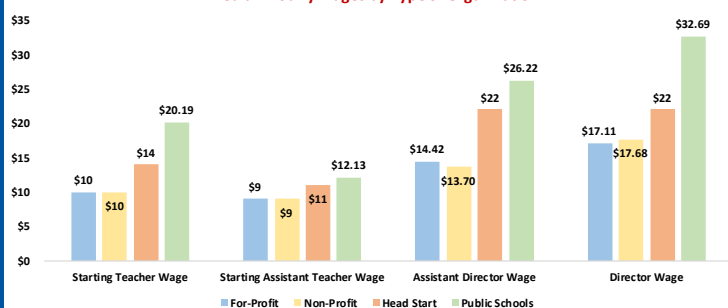
Key Findings

2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff Median Hourly Wages



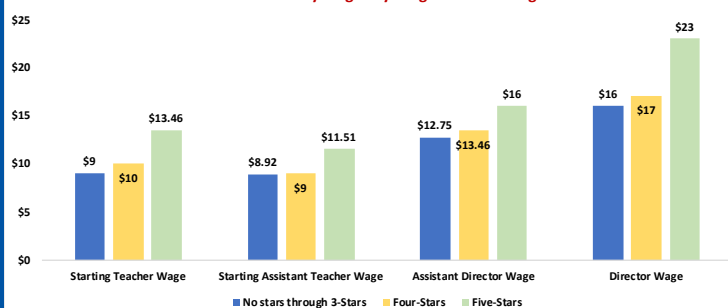
Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. Wages for assistant directors and directors represent median hourly wages.

2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff Median Hourly Wages by Type of Organization



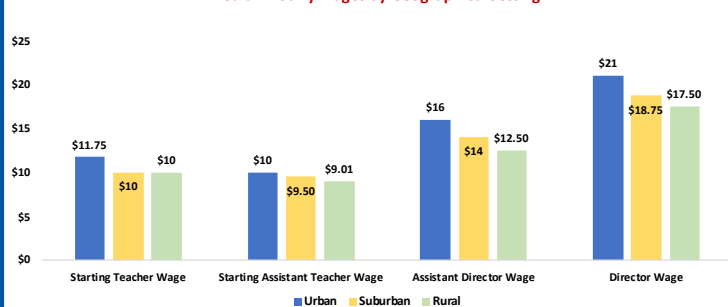
Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. Wages for assistant directors and directors represent median hourly wages.

2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff Median Hourly Wages by Program Star Rating



Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. Wages for assistant directors and directors represent median hourly wages.

2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff Median Hourly Wages by Geographical Setting



Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. Wages for assistant directors and directors represent median hourly wages.

ECE Workforce Earnings

Across early childhood education positions (i.e., directors, lead teachers and assistant teachers), median hourly wages have increased since CCSA's 2015 study, but still fall far below the level needed to attract and retain a high-quality workforce.

ECE Workforce Earnings by Type of Organization

Individuals working in nonprofit or in for-profit (tax-paying) programs earn about the same. While those individuals working in public programs (such as Head Start and schools) earn higher wages.

Earnings by Program Star Level

Among early care and education programs, earnings increase as the star level of the program increases.

Earnings by Geography

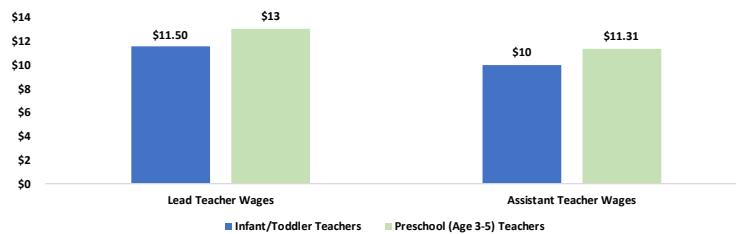
Earnings by staff in urban areas are higher than those in suburban or rural areas.



Workforce Wage Gap for Infant & Toddler Care

Individuals working with infants and toddlers earn less than those working with preschool children (age 3-5).

**2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff
Median Hourly Wages
Infant & Toddler Teachers vs Preschool (Age 3-5) Teachers**

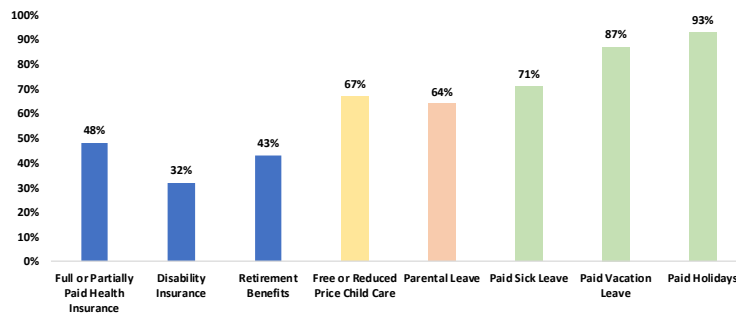


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

Employee Benefits

Overall, there is much room for improvement in employee benefits. Particularly with regard to health care, less than half of the workforce has access to health coverage through their employer.

**2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Staff
Employee Benefits**

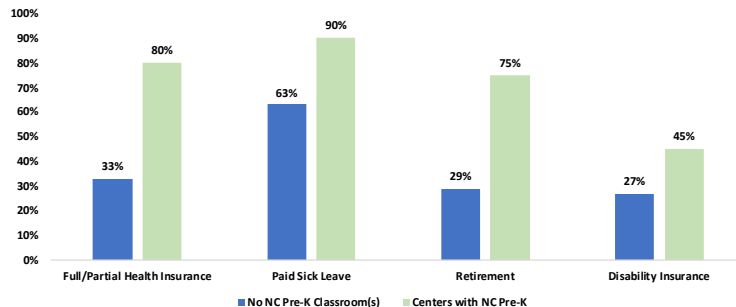


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

NC Pre-K as Driver for Benefits

Working in child care centers that also host NC Pre-K classrooms increases the likelihood that employees have access to benefits.

**2019 Child Care Center Early Care & Education Employee Benefits
Centers with NC Pre-K Classrooms vs Centers Without NC Pre-K**



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

Earnings and Compensation by County

Across the state, earnings and compensation of the ECE workforce varies greatly by county. Specific information related to each county's ECE workforce is available on CCSA's [website](#).

Recommendations

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS


The early care and education workforce plays a critical role in promoting healthy childhood development. Yet, individuals are not paid in a way that reflects this role and responsibility. As a result, 39% of teachers and 37% of assistant teachers reported receiving some type of public assistance in the past three years (e.g., Medicaid, SNAP, TANF and/or child care subsidy). The large wage gap between the earnings of those working with infants and toddlers and those working with preschool-age children undermines the ability to hire and retain staff during a child's earliest years when research shows the brain is growing the fastest.

Benefits are also important, particularly health coverage as the country continues to face the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, single site for-profit centers, which comprise the largest sector within the child care market (about 39%), are the least likely to offer health coverage (18%) and pay the lowest wages.

The Child Care WAGE\$® and Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® Programs.

The Child Care WAGE\$® and the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® programs address the education and compensation of the ECE workforce. Among N.C. ECE teachers and assistant teachers, 39% report that they had received a salary supplement funded through WAGE\$ or AWARD\$ at some point in their careers.




RECOMMENDATIONS





1. Increase funding for WAGE\$,® AWARD\$®, and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships to increase earnings (particularly for staff working with infants and toddlers) and to expand access to higher education coursework for the ECE workforce.
2. 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 through a dedicated revenue stream.
3. Consider strategies to increase access to employee benefits in private sector child care. 



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