



2019  
North Carolina  
Early Care and Education  
Workforce Study:

# ECE Workforce Education

*November, 2020*

**IN BRIEF:**

Access to high-quality child care makes a difference in the lives of young children. A child's earliest years are when the brain is developing the fastest, putting in place the foundation for all future learning (e.g., social, emotional, physical and cognitive development).

High-quality child care relies on a high-quality workforce—a workforce with the education and competencies to promote healthy child development.

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

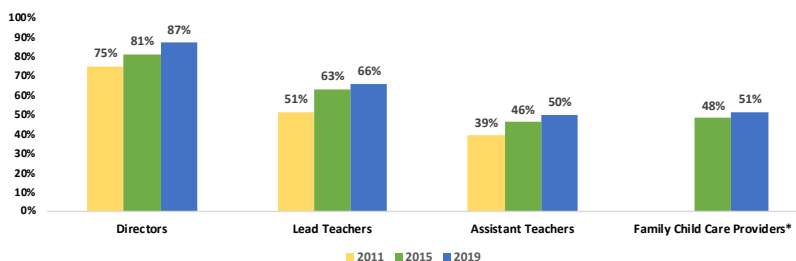


# Key Findings

## Overall Level of Education

Across early childhood education positions (e.g., directors, lead teachers, and assistant teachers), there has been steady growth in the percentage of the workforce who have attained higher education degrees.

NC Early Care & Education Workforce  
with at least an Associate's Degree

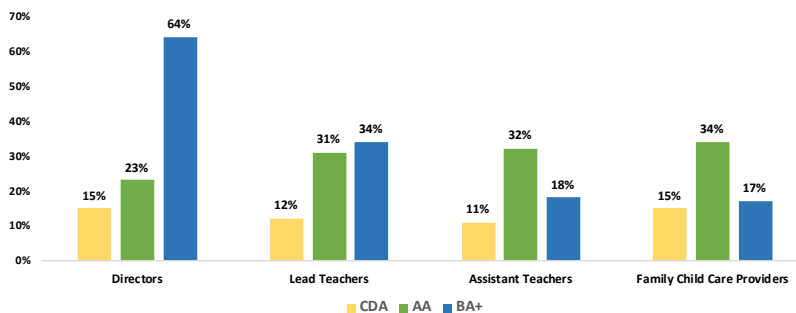


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. \*Education data for Family Child Care Providers is from 2014 and 2019.

## ECE Workforce by Education Level

Most of the workforce had taken six or more courses in early childhood education (82% of directors, 65% of teachers, 46% of assistants and 70% of family child care providers). The degree breakout follows.

2019 NC Early Care & Education Workforce  
By Education Level

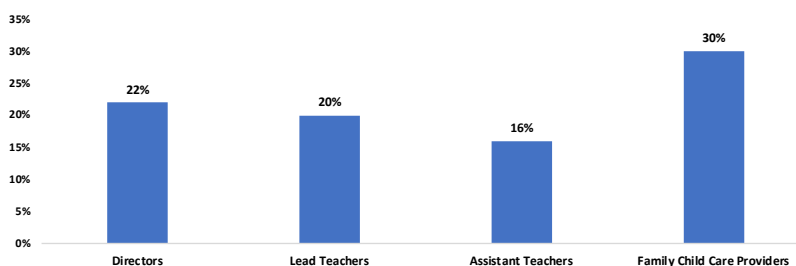


Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.

## Infant—Toddler Certificate

The infant toddler certificate is a series of courses related to children under age three. The 16-hour certificate is stackable toward an associate and bachelor's degree.

NC Early Care & Education Workforce  
with an Infant-Toddler Certificate



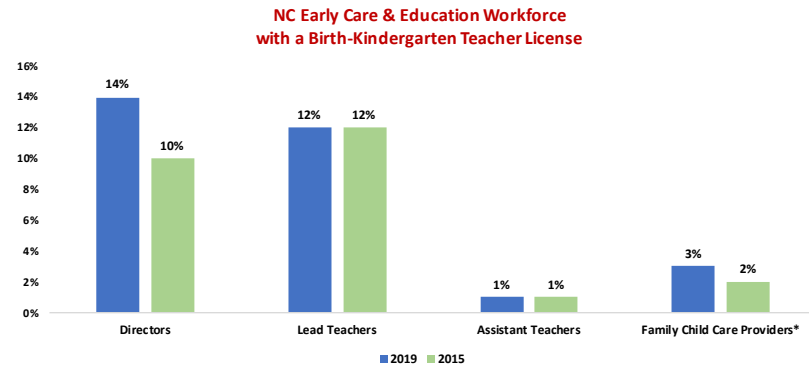
Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020.





## Birth-Kindergarten Teacher License

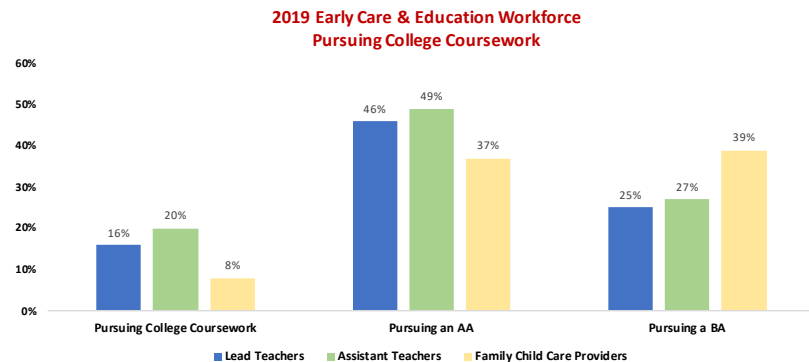
The percentage of the ECE workforce with a B-K license has increased over the past few years.



Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. \*Education data for Family Child Care Providers is from 2014 and 2019.

## Pursuing College Education

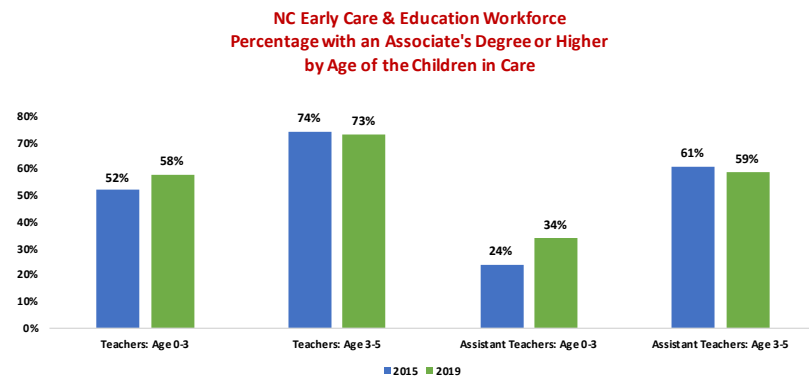
Beyond those who have attained a higher education degree, many are currently enrolled in pursuit of an AA/AAS or a BA.



Source: 2019 Workforce Study, Child Care Services Association, 2020. Those pursuing an AA or BA are a subset of the overall ECE workforce pursuing higher education coursework.

## Education Level and Age Group Taught

Overall, teaching staff who work with preschool children (age 3-5) tend to have higher levels of education than teaching staff who work with infants and toddlers—although gains have been made with regard to teaching staff working with infants and toddlers since 2015.



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

## Education by County.

Across the state, education levels of the ECE workforce vary 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. A child's earliest years are when the foundation for all future learning is built. This is why the education and competencies of the early care and education workforce are important.

In 2001, only 20% of teachers had at least an associate degree in early childhood education or had at least a bachelor's degree in another field. By 2011, the percentage had more than doubled to 46%. By 2019, 59% of teachers had either a degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree or more in some other field and early childhood coursework.

The progress made over the years is incredible. However, more progress is needed, particularly among those individuals who work with infants and toddlers.


ECE workforce pay and benefits are also tied to the attainment of higher education degrees. Pay and compensation are discussed more fully in a separate brief related to the 2019 ECE Workforce Study.

### **The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program.**

The widespread availability of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships has helped raised the qualifications of the ECE workforce.

Since the 1990s, the T.E.A.C.H. program has addressed the education, compensation and turnover of the early childhood workforce across the state. According to center directors, more than half (55%) of centers in N.C. have had at least one staff member over time who has received a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship and 35% of directors reported that they were either currently or had in the past received a scholarship.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase funding for T.E.A.C.H., WAGE\$, and AWARD\$ to increase access to higher education coursework for the ECE workforce.
2. Support strategies to increase access to higher education specifically with regard to those individuals working with infants and toddlers.
3. Implement a salary scale tied to certifications, levels of education and experience that supplements ECE workforce pay through a dedicated revenue stream.
4. Pair higher education with onsite coaching to help translate knowledge to practice. 



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