



Colorado



400,671

Children age 0-5



18,290*

Members of the early childhood teaching workforce

Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work that has been recognized as essential to children’s learning and development, supportive for families, and foundational to the economy. In the best of times, educators do this work in conditions that undermine their well-being, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened the harm caused to this workforce, nearly all of whom are women. Adequate public investment and state policies that appropriately prepare, support, and compensate the early education workforce can remedy these dire conditions by establishing systems that benefit early educators and the children they care for and teach.

Occupation	Median Wage
Child care worker	\$13.79
Preschool teacher	\$15.25
Center director	\$23.01
Kindergarten teacher	\$28.25
Elementary teacher	\$29.68
All U.S. occupations	\$21.28

Earnings by Occupation

- ▶ In 2019, the median wage for child care workers was \$13.79, **a 5% increase since 2017.**
- ▶ For preschool teachers, the median wage was \$15.25, **a 5% increase since 2017.**
- ▶ For preschool or child care center directors, the median wage was \$23.01, **a 3% decrease since 2017.**

Early educators pay a penalty for working with younger children.

Colorado early educators with a bachelor’s degree are paid 26.5 percent less than their colleagues in the K-8 system. The poverty rate for early educators in Colorado is 15.1 percent, much higher than for Colorado workers in general (8.6 percent) and 6.3 times as high as for K-8 teachers (2.4 percent).**



Interested in learning more?

- To see how Colorado compares to other states, visit our [State Explorer](#).
- [View the 2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index](#) to learn more about each policy area.
- For an overview of data sources for the indicators listed below, see [Appendix 1: Data Sources & Methodology](#).

Early Childhood Workforce Policies

Qualifications & Educational Supports: Stalled	Pre-K	BA minimum for lead teacher?	No
		CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?	No
	Licensed centers	BA minimum for director?	No
		BA minimum for lead teacher?	No
		CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?	No
	Licensed homes	BA minimum for lead teacher?	No
		CDA/equivalent minimum for assistant teacher?	No
	Scholarships to support educational pathways	BA?	Not Applicable
		AA?	Not Applicable
		CDA or equivalent?	Not Applicable
Collects data on scholarship recipients?		Not Applicable	
Work Environments: Edging Forward	Centers	Paid time in professional development?	Yes
		Paid planning and/or preparation time?	Yes
		Salary schedule/benefits?	Yes
	Homes	Paid time in professional development?	No
		Paid planning and/or preparation time?	No
		Salary schedule/benefits?	No
Compensation & Financial Relief Strategies: Stalled		Salary parity for publicly funded pre-K teachers?	No parity
		Compensation standards required?	No
		Compensation guidelines or plans to develop?	Yes: plans only
		Earmarks for salaries in public funding?	No
		Financial relief: Stipend or tax credit?	No
		Financial relief: Bonus?	Yes
Workforce Data: Making Headway	Registry	Inclusive of all licensed settings?	Other
		Collects wage data?	Yes
		Collects benefits data?	Not Available
		Collects race/ethnicity data?	Yes
		Reports data publicly?	Yes
	Survey	Inclusive of all licensed settings?	Licensed +
		Collects wage data?	Yes
		Collects benefits data?	Yes
		Collects race/ethnicity data?	Yes
		Reports data publicly?	Yes
Financial Resources: Edging Forward		State reported extra CCDF spending?	Yes
		Ratio of per-child pre-K to K-12 spending over 50%?	No

Family & Income Support Policies

Income Supports: Making Headway	Refundable earned income tax credit?	Yes
	Higher than federal minimum wage, indexed for inflation?	Yes
	Refundable child care tax credit?	Yes
Health & Well-Being Supports: Stalled	Paid sick days law?	No
	Paid family leave law?	No
	Expanded Medicaid eligibility?	Yes

Notes

*Early educators work in public- and private-sector homes, centers, and schools. This estimate includes the following occupations as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Occupational Employment Statistics: “child care workers,” “preschool teachers, excluding special education,” “preschool teachers, special education,” “education administrators: preschool/child care center programs.” These data do not include the self-employed, although home-based child care assistants, who are employees, are likely included in the “child care worker” category. This estimate is from 2019 and does not reflect employment changes as a result of the pandemic. Demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity and gender are not reported due to a lack of comparable data across states. State-based surveys or registries may provide more comprehensive estimates of the ECE workforce.

**Gould, E., Whitebook, M., Mokhiber, Z., & Austin, L. (2020). *Financing Early Educator Quality: A Values-Based Budget for Every State*. A series of state-by-state reports produced by the Economic Policy Institute and University of California Berkeley’s Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/financing-early-educator-quality-a-values-based-budget-for-every-state/>.