

Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020

# Introduction & Policy Recommendations



# Introduction & Policy Recommendations

The existing early care and education (ECE) system does a disservice to the educators — largely women and often women of color — who nurture and facilitate learning for millions of the nation’s youngest children every day. Despite their important, complex labor, early educators’ working conditions undermine their well-being and create devastating financial insecurity well into retirement age. These conditions also jeopardize their ability to work effectively with children.

As we find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic, child care has been hailed as essential, yet policy responses to COVID-19 have mostly ignored educators themselves, leaving most to choose between their livelihood and their health. Unlike public schools, when child care programs close, there’s no guarantee that early educators will continue to be paid. Even as many providers try to keep their doors open to ensure their financial security, the combination of higher costs to meet safety protocols and lower revenue from fewer children enrolled is leading to job losses and program closures. Many of these closures and lost jobs are expected to become permanent. Over the course of the first eight months of the pandemic, 166,000 jobs in the child care industry were lost. As of October 2020, the industry was only 83 percent as large as it was in February, before the pandemic began.<sup>1</sup>

**Why is the ECE workforce expected to shoulder so much of the care and education crisis in this country, with so little concern for their own safety and well-being?** It is no coincidence that this expectation falls on early educators, who are poorer, less organized as a workforce, and more likely to be women of color than teachers of older children.<sup>2</sup>

## Key Issue

### **LACK OF EARLY EDUCATOR VOICE IN POLICY DECISIONS MASKS POOR WORKING CONDITIONS**

Compared with early educators, teachers in the K-12 system can more readily expect their work environment to support their economic, physical, and emotional well-being. For example, K-12 teachers typically can rely on a salary schedule that accounts for experience and level of education, paid professional development activities, paid planning time each week, and access to benefits like paid personal/sick leave, health care, and retirement. Public school teacher unions and professional organizations help channel K-12 teachers' collective voice and represent their interests. As a result, their negotiated contracts tend to be explicit about teaching supports.<sup>3</sup>

Most early educators lack a formal or organized mechanism for voicing concerns and influencing decisions about their working conditions and about how their ECE programs are financed and structured. Overall, unionization among early educators is much lower than among K-12 teachers.<sup>4</sup> However, collective bargaining has been an effective strategy for improving supports for at least some home-based providers in recent years. In Massachusetts, a law establishing collective bargaining rights for home-based providers receiving child care subsidies has led to provisions for paid sick leave as well as paid family and medical leave.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, under contracts negotiated by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), home-based providers accrue paid sick leave in Rhode Island.<sup>6</sup> In 2019, California joined at least 11 other states in granting collective bargaining rights to home-based providers, which may lead to additional supports.<sup>7</sup>

These efforts demonstrate the necessity of an organized voice and leadership structure composed of early educators themselves for effecting true and lasting change.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the historical and pervasive undervaluing of labor performed by women and especially women of color had created one of the most underpaid workforces in the United States. Economic insecurity is widespread among the ECE workforce, regardless of years of tenure in the field or higher education degrees. And as difficult as it is for anyone to be an early educator in America, it's even worse for Black and Latina women, who face persistent wage gaps and belong to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

Continuing to pay early educators poverty-level wages out of an expectation that women, especially women of color, will continue to do this work for (almost) free — either out of love for children or because they have few other options — perpetuates sexism, racism, and classism in the United States. Disrupting historical notions of early education and care as unskilled and of little value requires social recognition of early educators' crucial contributions and a re-imagining of the entire early care and education system.

Early educators' poor working conditions are not inevitable, but a product of policy choices that have consistently let down the women who are doing this essential work. It's time for the system to change. Making early care and education an attractive field now and in the future means fundamentally reshaping early childhood jobs to provide fair compensation and reasonable working conditions, not least during a pandemic that continues to pose serious health and financial risks to early educators. Not only will this change make a meaningful difference to the financial lives of current and future early educators, but it will be a major step toward recognizing the value of historically feminine work and establishing a racially and gender-just society.

“

The burden of school closures and parents continuing to work falls on child care providers. We need to be properly recognized through appropriate funding, PPE, and support systems. The government is largely ignoring the particularly unique burden that is put on child care during this pandemic.”

**Child Care Center Director, California<sup>9</sup>**

## What's New

Since 2016, the biennial *Early Childhood Workforce Index* has tracked the status of the early care and education workforce and related state policies in order to identify promising practices for improving early educator jobs and changes over time. This third edition includes new analyses as well as updated policy indicators and recommendations. Highlights include:

- A comparison of child care worker wages and a living wage in every state;
- A comparison of pay and poverty rates between early educators with bachelor's degrees and K-8 teachers;
- Spotlights on state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Detailed tables on state workforce policies and initiatives, especially for Qualifications & Educational Supports, Compensation & Financial Relief, and Workforce Data; and
- Data on the U.S. territories.

To view state assessments in previous editions of the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, see:

- [Early Childhood Workforce Index - 2018](#) ↗
- [Early Childhood Workforce Index - 2016](#) ↗

# Key Findings: The Early Childhood Educator Workforce

Across almost all settings in the country, early educators are in economic distress, and this reality falls disproportionately on women of color and on those working with the youngest children (infants and toddlers).<sup>10</sup> Early care and education fails to generate sufficient wages that would allow early educators to meet their basic needs. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted the child care industry, progress toward better compensation has been limited and uneven across states and among different classifications of early educators.

## Who Are Early Educators?

In this report, when we speak to policies, programs, and financing for the early childhood workforce, we align our boundaries of the workforce with those articulated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The ISCED defines early educators as those who are “responsible for learning, education, and care activities of young children” and working in programs that are “usually school-based or otherwise institutionalized for a group of children (for example, center-, community-, or home-based), excluding purely private family-based arrangements that may be purposeful but are not organized in a program (for example, care and informal learning provided by parents, relatives, friends, or domestic workers).”<sup>11</sup>

We focus primarily on those who work in teaching and administrative roles in early care and education settings serving children prior to kindergarten. We also compare the status of early educators to those teaching older children in order to highlight disparities in working conditions for educators across the birth-to-age-eight spectrum of early childhood development.<sup>12</sup>

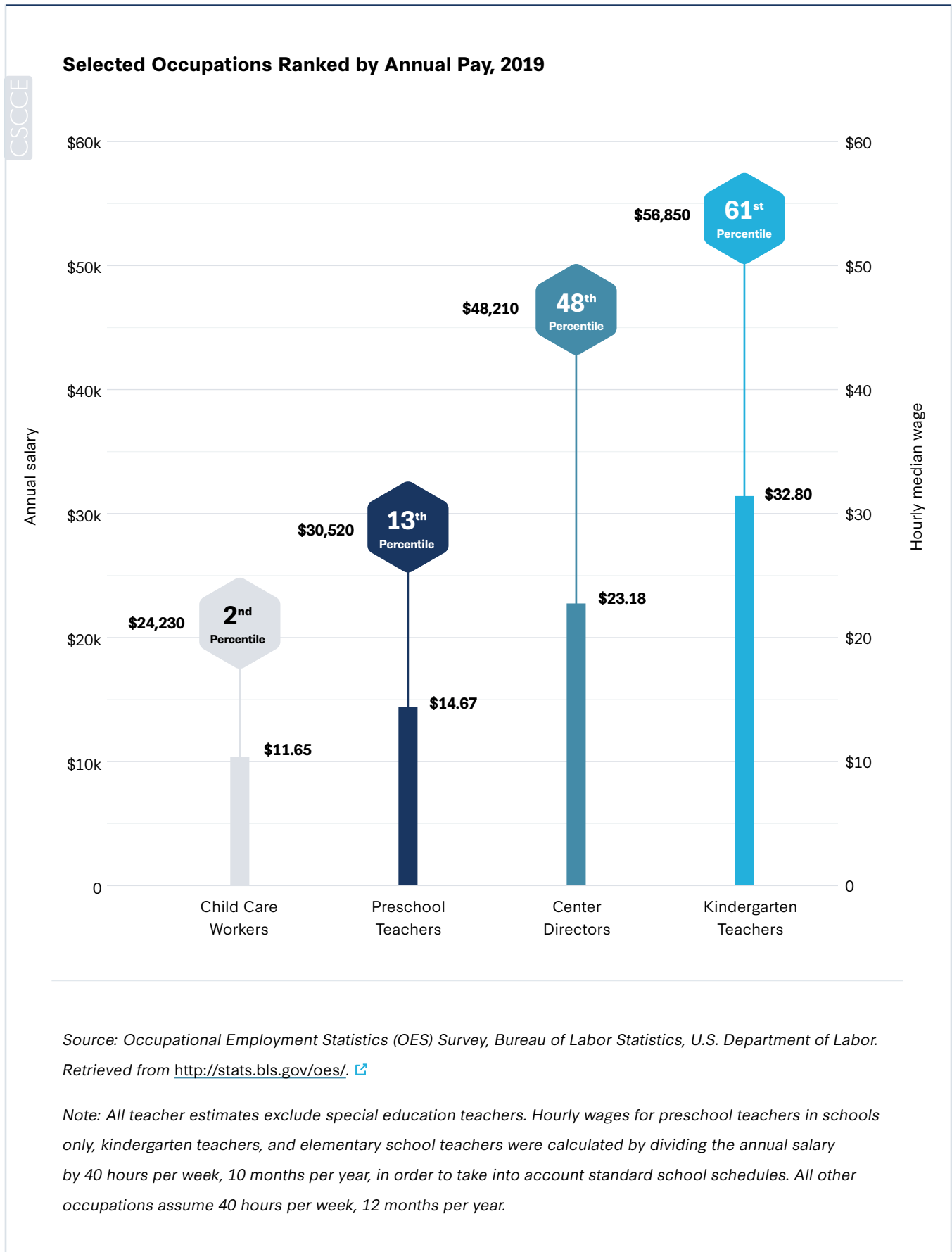


A wide variety of terms are used to refer to the early care and education sector and its workforce depending on the age of children served (e.g., infants and toddlers, preschool-age children), the location of the service (centers, schools, or homes), auspice and funding streams, job roles, and data sources. We use “early childhood workforce” or “early educators” to encompass all those who work directly with young children for pay in early care and education settings in roles focused on teaching and caregiving. We use more specific labels, such as “Head Start teacher” or “home-based provider” when we are referring to a particular type of setting. In some cases, we are limited by the labels used in a particular data source. For example, in some instances, we refer to “childcare workers” and “preschool teachers” because we relied on data specific to subcategories of the workforce as defined and labeled by the Standard Occupational Classification of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The most recent (2019) state-level wage data attest to the persistent low wages of early educators, as well as earnings disparities across early childhood settings and in comparison to other teaching jobs and occupations. Child care workers in particular continue to be one of the lowest-paid occupations nationwide. When all occupations are ranked by annual pay, child care workers remain nearly at the bottom percentile, unchanged since the inaugural 2016 *Index* (see **Figure 1.1**).

**For a single adult with one child, median child care worker wages do not meet a living wage in any state, yet many early educators are themselves also parents, with children at home.**

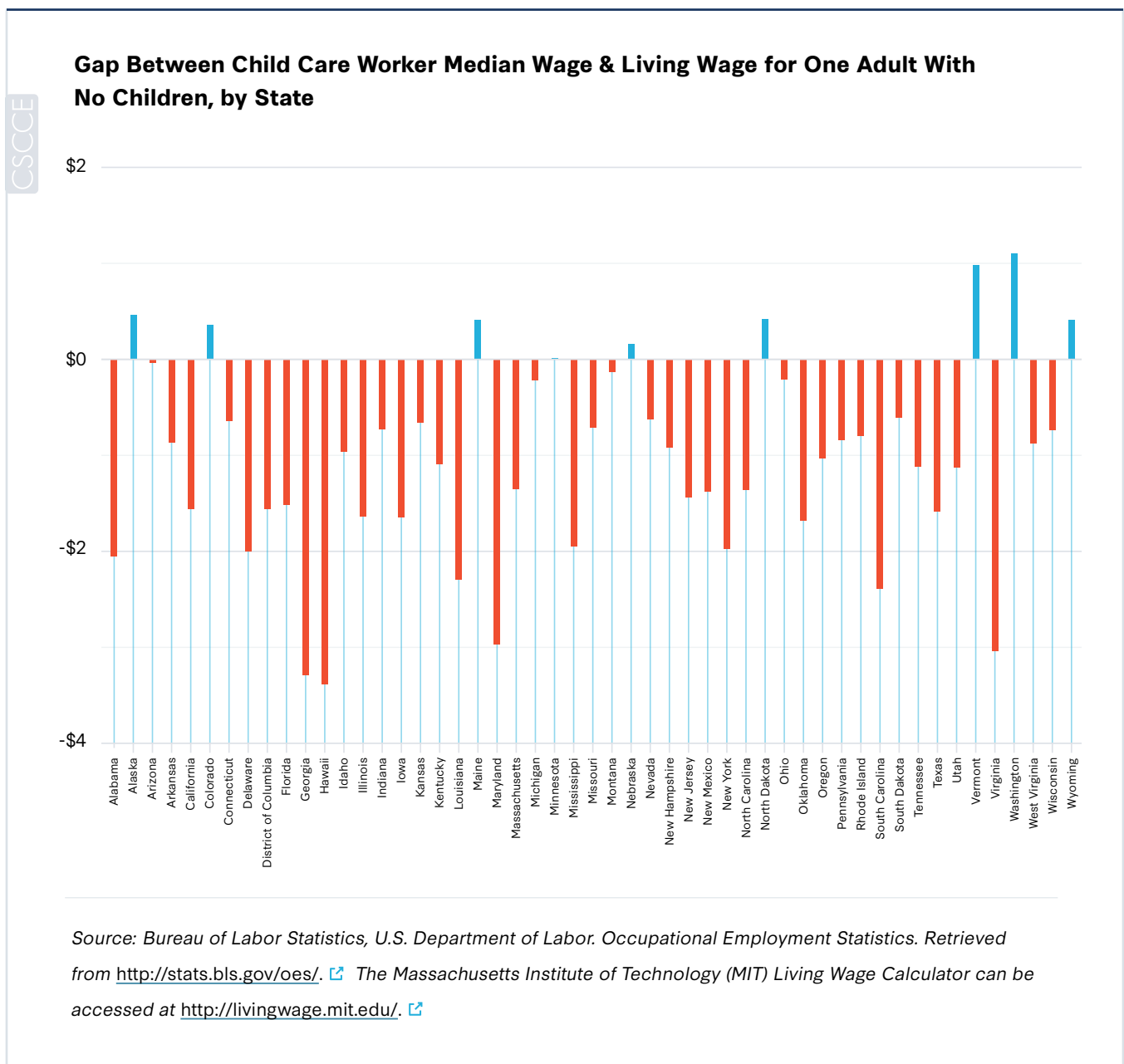
FIGURE 1.1





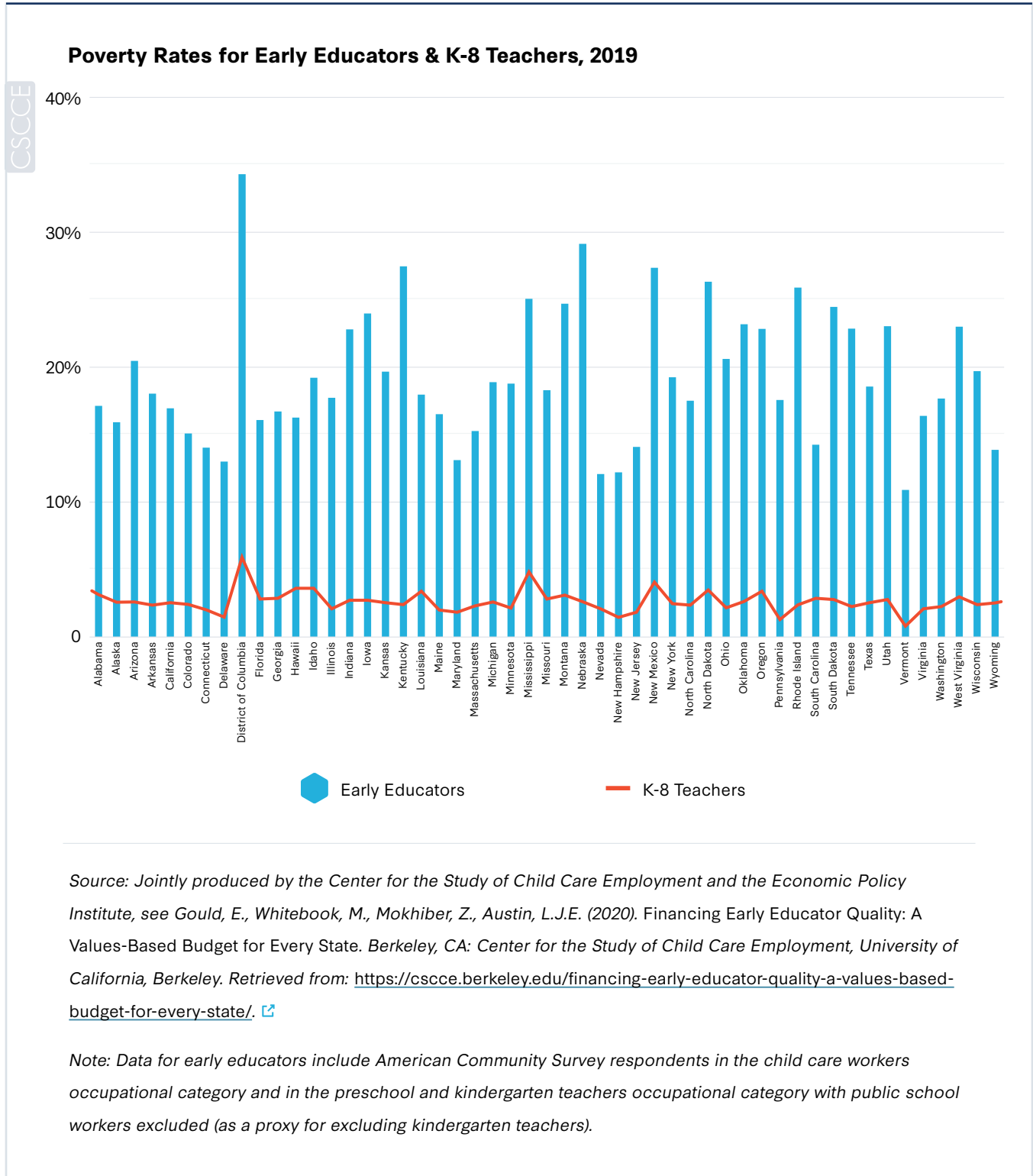
For a *single adult with no children*, median child care worker wages in only 10 states (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming) are equivalent to or more than the living wage for that state. In the majority of states, wages fall short of the living wage for a single adult, from just under the living wage in Montana (short by \$0.13), to as much as \$3.39 less per hour in Hawaii (see **Figure 1.2**). The median gap between the child care wage and livable wage threshold across all states is  $-\$0.96$ , meaning around one-half of the states are at least \$1.00 per hour short of the threshold for a living wage for a single adult. For a *single adult with one child*, median child care worker wages do not meet a living wage in any state, yet many early educators are themselves also parents, with children at home.

**FIGURE 1.2**



These low wages translate into high levels of poverty among educators, ranging, from 10.9 percent in Virginia to 34.4 percent in Florida. Meanwhile, poverty rates for K-8 teachers range from 0.8 percent in Virginia to 5.9 percent in Florida (see **Figure 1.3**).

**FIGURE 1.3**



# Key Findings: State Policies to Improve Early Childhood Educator Jobs

State decision makers can play a powerful role in reshaping early childhood jobs for the current and future ECE workforce. Across seven policy areas, the *Early Childhood Workforce Index* examines state-level policies that can spur progress on the status and well-being of early childhood educators. These seven policy areas are organized into two categories:

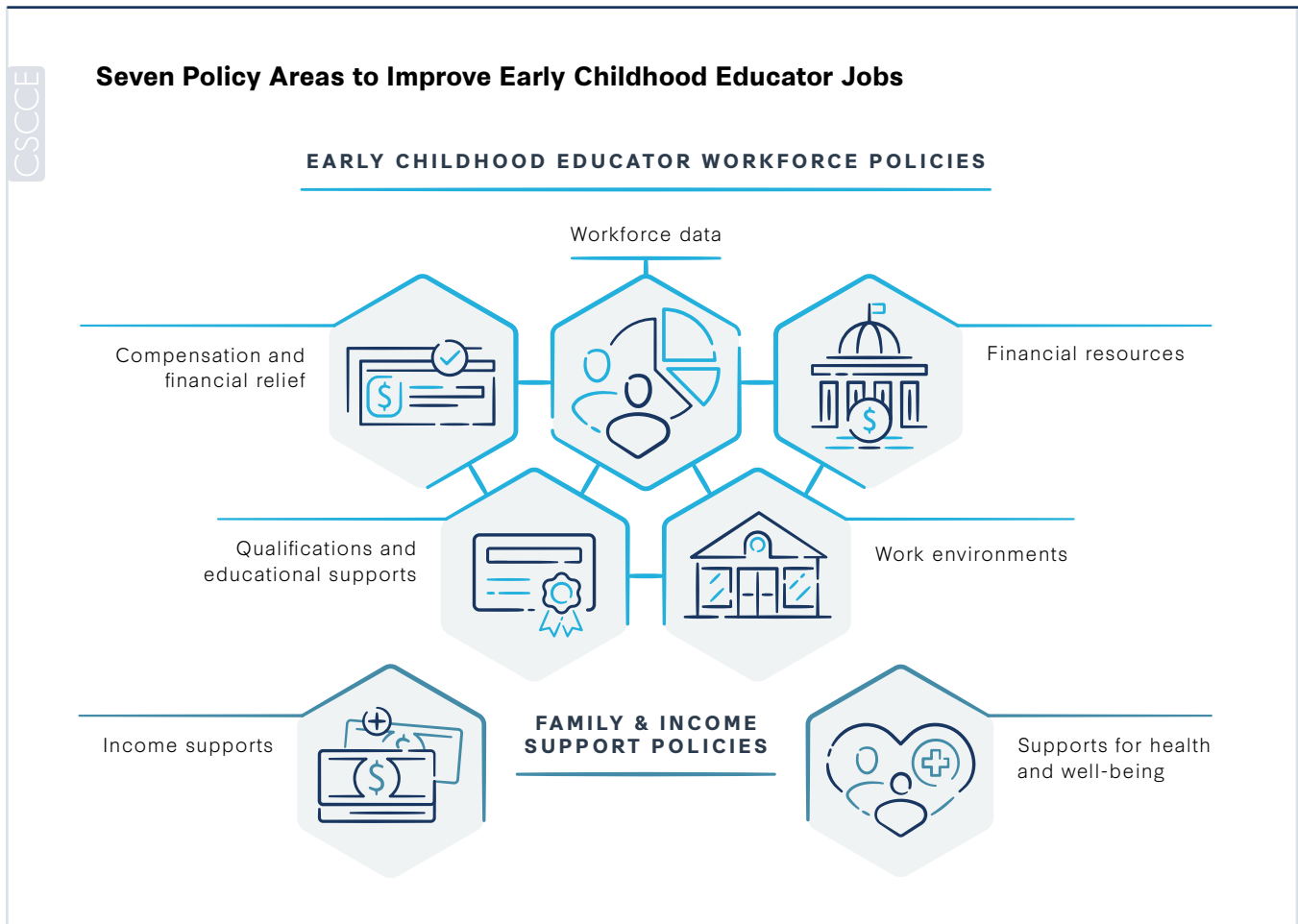
## Early Childhood Educator Workforce Policies

This legislation, regulation, and other public rule-making is created and implemented with the intention of shaping and governing the early care and education workforce and system in five essential areas:

## Family & Income Support Policies

Broader social and labor legislation, regulation, and initiatives are designed to benefit workers and their families across occupations, not only those who work in early care and education, in two essential areas:

FIGURE 1.4



In each of the seven policy areas, the *Early Childhood Workforce Index* assesses states based on measurable policy indicators that represent state-level opportunities to enhance the lives of the many children and adults affected by ECE employment conditions. To summarize overall state action in each policy area, states are assigned to one of three tiers, based on their performance on the indicators:

- **Stalled:** The state is making limited or no progress;
- **Edging Forward:** The state is making partial progress; or
- **Making Headway:** The state is taking action and advancing promising policies.

In light of the persistent low wages and economic insecurity for early educators, the systemic inequities that exist, and the increased risk and uncertainty of working in early care and education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the appraisal of state policies presented in this edition of the *Index* continues to reveal a troubling state of affairs. As in 2018, the majority of states were appraised as **stalled** or **edging forward** across early childhood educator workforce policy categories related to qualifications, work environments, compensation, and financial resources (see **Figure 1.5**). Workforce data remains the strongest area of progress, with most states

implementing workforce registries and/or workforce surveys, though there is still much room for improvement in the comprehensiveness and usability of the data collected.

Overall, efforts to prepare, support, and compensate early educators are persistently sidelined and underfunded. Often, the ECE workforce must settle for even less than they have asked for. As a result, while some work has been done on state ECE policies between 2018 and 2020, not nearly enough progress has been made.

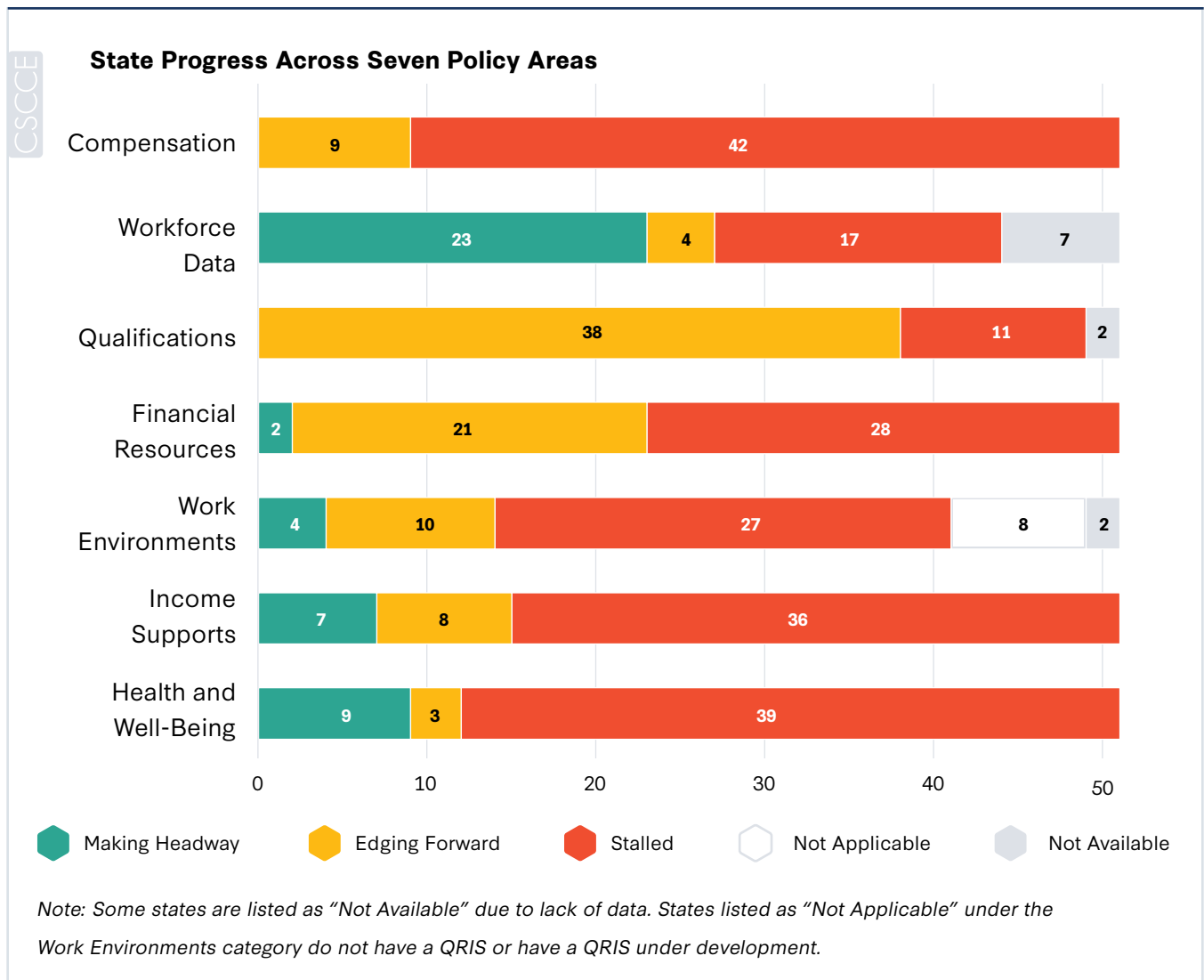
Bright spots include:

- Several states improved their standing with regard to salary parity for publicly funded pre-K teachers (Hawaii, Nevada, New Jersey, and Rhode Island). Though city efforts are not assessed in the *Index*, it is notable that New York City established agreements in 2019 to fund starting salary parity for all certified teachers in community-based ECE settings and to provide raises for unionized, non-certified teachers and other staff by 2021. This positive step could provide a model for the rest of the country.<sup>13</sup>
- The District of Columbia, Illinois, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington have articulated compensation standards or guidelines for early educators that are not limited to pre-K. Thirteen additional states have convened advisory groups or task forces, or they have made other plans to address this issue.
- As crisis measures during the pandemic only, a few states offered additional payments to early educators.<sup>14</sup> North Carolina and New Mexico provided early education staff with monthly bonus payments ranging from \$350 to \$950 per month.<sup>15</sup> Kentucky issued a one-time \$1,500 bonus payment to early educators providing services for families of essential workers.<sup>16</sup> Wisconsin relaxed eligibility requirements for their pre-pandemic REWARD stipend initiative and granted awards to recipients who were furloughed or working reduced hours, as well as a one-time stipend increase in July 2020 to active stipend recipients.<sup>17</sup> Vermont provided additional funding to child care programs that were ordered closed during April and May 2020; one of the requirements for receiving the additional funding was that staff pay must be maintained.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, these states are the exception: most states have not prioritized educator pay, and one-time payments are not enough to support early educators and their families.
- Delaware increased center director education requirements from a minimum of an associate degree to a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree, joining the District of Columbia as the only other state in the country to do so.<sup>19</sup>
- Three states expanded their scholarship programs to include pathways for early educators to achieve bachelor's degrees (Arizona, New Jersey, Oklahoma) in addition to associate degrees and Child Development Associate® Credentials (CDA) or their equivalent. Four states added scholarship programs (Arkansas, Maine, Montana, and Oregon).

Similarly, for both income support and health and well-being support, the majority of states remain **stalled**. However, since 2018, there has been some progress:

- Income supports: Utah and Montana both implemented laws to offer an earned income tax credit, while the District of Columbia and Oregon passed legislation to provide a refundable child care tax credit for families. As a result, Montana improved from **stalled** to **edging forward**, and the District of Columbia and Oregon both improved from **edging forward** to **making headway**.
- Health and well-being supports: Six states (Idaho, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Utah, and Virginia) expanded health coverage eligibility through Medicaid, three states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Oregon) adopted paid family leave, and one state (New York) enacted paid sick day legislation. As a result of these policy changes, four states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon) improved from **edging forward** to **making headway**.

FIGURE 1.5



For an overview of the assessment of each state across policy areas, see **Table 1.1. Overview of State Progress, by Policy Area**. For more information about each of the indicators and the data sources used, see **Appendix 1: Data Sources & Methodology**.

# Making Headway: Principles & Policy Recommendations to Improve Early Childhood Jobs

First published in 2016, the *Early Childhood Workforce Index* was designed before the pandemic and focused on specific policies that states can change. The impact of COVID-19 on the child care system, especially for the ECE workforce, also brings attention to racial inequity within the ECE system. The twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism have given us a new understanding of the harm suffered by the women providing ECE services and the urgent need to reimagine how early care and education services are provided in the United States. The entire market-based early care and education system is profoundly flawed and needs to be redesigned. Future editions of the *Index* will re-examine our indicators of state progress in an effort to encourage bolder action.

In the meantime, we offer the following principles and policy recommendations as a guide to ensure that we are moving toward a system that recognizes and promotes educators' rights:

- The right for early educators to be respected for the skilled and foundational work they do;
- The right to have just and fair compensation for their work; and
- The right to working conditions that support their overall health and well-being.

## Principles for Reform

At the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), we are committed to advancing a public system of early care and education that is equitable for children, their families, and early educators. The ECE system in the United States is not immune to structural inequalities based on gender, class, race, and language that are woven throughout our nation's institutions and culture. The current organization and financing of early care and education poses severe risks to educators' well-being, reinforces disparities in earnings and opportunities among educators, and hinders efforts of all educators to facilitate children's learning. These barriers to a functioning, equitable early care and education system have only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We approach our research and analysis with a sense of urgency to support the well-being of the current ECE workforce and to inform systemic change for the incoming and future workforce. We employ five guiding principles to assess the process and impact of our own work, as well as those reforms and proposals put forth by others. We understand these principles as matters of social justice and requisite for the reform of early care and education. Each principle provides a lens through which to assess current policies and practices as well as emerging initiatives.

**Amplify educators’ voices, partner on decision making:** Most early educators are not represented by a professional organization or union on the job, and their voices are missing from conversations where decisions are made about policies that directly impact their practice and well-being. The field must respect educators’ perspectives, prioritize their partnership, and create conditions for their participation in the design and implementation of policies that impact them. Furthermore, it is essential to establish robust pathways for educators to assume leadership roles. We must continually assess whose voices are being heard and whose voices are absent in decision making and address the conditions that create barriers for participation.

**Provide opportunity, ensure access:** Barriers reside within systems, not with the individuals who encounter them. Systemic racial and gender oppression combine to create substantial gaps in college attendance and degree completion for people of color, women, and especially women of color. Within the ECE sector, these achievements impact individual factors such as job mobility, compensation, and levels of student debt acquired over time. When barriers are removed and conditions are established that facilitate college access and degree completion, early educators have graduated at higher than average rates.<sup>20</sup> Dedicated, sufficient resources and intentional strategies are required to create equitable opportunities and conditions that allow early educators to access and successfully pursue higher education. This is especially important as ECE systems raise qualification requirements and reward programs and individuals for attaining education.

**Ensure diversity, disrupt racial stratification:** Although the early educator workforce is racially and linguistically diverse, that diversity is not distributed equitably across positions within the field. Women of color are overrepresented in the lowest-paying jobs, underrepresented in leadership roles, and frequently paid unequal wages for equal work. Intentionally disrupting racial and ethnic stratification requires implementation of mechanisms that facilitate racial justice.

**Ensure sustainability, dedicate sufficient funding:** ECE funding must be reflective of the true cost of services and thus requires substantially increased public investment. Parents shouldn’t be expected to shoulder high costs individually, and teachers shouldn’t be expected to subsidize the system through poverty-level wages. Additional investment alone is not enough: addressing the deficiencies of the current system also requires a new ECE financing structure. ECE must be recognized as a public good and funded accordingly to ensure access for all children and families and good jobs for educators.

**Establish consistency, eliminate fragmentation:** Inconsistency in program standards and funding fuels the current inequitable system, reinforced by reforms that address only certain sectors of ECE. It is important to assess the impact of these changes: are they inclusive of all early educators or do they drive inequities and create greater complexity for programs and other service providers?



## Policy Recommendations

States have a tremendous amount of latitude in how their ECE system is organized and implemented. As a result, they have a responsibility to prioritize ECE in their state, even with limited federal resources. In line with our core principles and based on our assessment of current status, we offer specific recommendations to improve early childhood educator jobs in U.S. states and territories for each of the five policy areas of early childhood policy included in the *Index*.

### Qualifications & Educational Supports

- Align qualification requirements, across settings, with national recommendations (i.e., the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council report [\*Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation\*](#) [↗](#)).
  - Establish minimum requirements that reflect foundational knowledge (i.e., a Child Development Associate Credential or equivalent) for all early childhood teaching staff.
  - Require a bachelor's degree with ECE specialization and individual licensure or certification for lead teachers and program leaders, in line with what is required for teachers of older children.
- Develop strategies and ensure sufficient financial resources to disrupt systemic barriers to education and create the conditions for success in higher education. Ensure that all members of the current and future workforce have opportunities and supports to acquire education and training at no personal financial cost. These supports should begin with entry-level foundational knowledge and align with a pathway based on degree and competency requirements to facilitate attainment of associate and bachelor's degrees. Include targeted opportunities and supports for people of color as well as individuals who speak English as a second language.
- Collect data about scholarship programs and other educational initiatives to identify disparities in access and to assess whether such programs are providing appropriate levels of support.
- As new qualification requirements are implemented, develop an intentional strategy to support the existing workforce to avoid displacing current early educators from their jobs. Provide options for members of the current workforce to maintain their employment by accounting for existing experience and by providing financial support to acquire additional education, training, or certification. Ensure adequate timelines to meet new requirements.
- Until qualifications are established in regulatory requirements, educators allocated time and resources to meet those requirements, and programs funded to pay educators accordingly, neither individuals nor programs should be penalized for failing to meet qualifications that are only recommended and not required.

## Work Environment Standards

- Adopt workplace standards, such as guidance on appropriate levels of paid planning time, which are necessary for educators to engage in professional practice to support children’s learning and to alleviate conditions that cause educator stress.
  - Use existing models, such as the [International Labour Organization Policy Guidelines](#) [↗](#) and the U.S.-based [Model Work Standards for Centers and Homes](#). [↗](#)
  - Develop intentional mechanisms to engage educators as influential partners in the process of developing workplace standards to ensure these standards reflect their needs and experiences.
  - In partnership with educators, assess and update definitions of quality, licensing, and competencies to include adopted workplace standards, with the goal of implementing equitable standards across programs. Recognize and remedy the racial and class inequities embedded in quality rating systems by providing sufficient public funding for *all* programs to meet standards.
  - Provide financial resources and technical assistance to enable programs to implement standards in a reasonable period of time and to sustain compliance with these standards over time.
  - Require all programs that receive public funding to complete training on the standards and to complete an annual self-assessment and improvement plan.
- Identify and implement strategies for ECE teachers, faculty, quality improvement staff, and other stakeholders to learn about work environment issues, including via technical assistance, professional development, and teacher and leader preparation programs.
- Establish the right of all ECE staff to organize/join a union. Unions can serve as a way for the people doing the work to monitor working conditions and can provide a safe channel to report unsafe or problem conditions.
- Ensure protections are in place for workers who report workplace or regulatory violations (e.g., [California’s whistleblowing law](#) [↗](#)) and that all educators are aware of and informed about their rights, including state laws around occupational health and safety.
- Regularly collect data from early educators to assess how they experience work environment standards.
- In addition, as long as educators continue to work in emergency conditions in which they are risking their lives, states should **immediately** provide:
  - PPE and sanitizing supplies that educators need for themselves and for the children in their care;
  - Free access to COVID-19 testing and priority access to vaccines;
  - Guaranteed paid sick leave if educators must quarantine because of a positive test or exposure to the virus or if they become symptomatic;
  - Guaranteed health coverage for educators and family members in their household; and
  - Guaranteed pay of no less than the locally assessed living wage.


## Compensation & Financial Relief Strategies

- Prioritize appropriate compensation — wages/salaries as well as benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement plans) — as an essential component for rebuilding the early care and education system. Include early educators working in both center- and home-based child care settings. Educate policymakers and the public at large about the importance of better pay and benefits for ensuring a skilled and stable early educator workforce.
- Establish wage and benefit standards that: set the wage floor at the locally assessed living wage; account for job role, experience, and education levels; and calibrate up to parity with similarly qualified elementary school teachers. Ensure regular adjustments for cost of living and changes in educational attainment.
- Dedicate sufficient public funding for all programs to meet wage and benefit standards. Require and monitor adherence to those standards as a condition of the funding.
- Collect data on early educator compensation in order to identify and remedy [racial wage gaps](#) [↗](#) and other pay inequities, such as [lower pay for infant-toddler teachers](#). [↗](#)
- Frame advocacy messages to clarify that financial relief initiatives (tax credits, stipends) are an interim strategy, not a long-term solution to achieve appropriate wages and benefits.

## Workforce Data

- Develop and commit to a plan to enact required participation in state workforce data systems by all members of the ECE workforce employed in schools, center- and home-based child care settings.
- Ensure that data systems support analysis and reporting and are used to:
  - Assess the impact of policy and funding decisions on early educators;
  - Inform local, state, and national ECE reform efforts; and
  - Identify and remedy disparities in such areas as compensation, educational attainment, and tenure according to, for example, race, age, and geography, among others.
- Identify potential federal (e.g., Child Care Development Fund [CCDF]), state, and local funding sources and design advocacy strategies to secure funds for workforce data collection, management, and analysis.
- Ensure that workforce data collection and analysis are part of early childhood governance functions and support the integration of workforce data systems with broader early childhood data, such as licensing databases, resource and referral databases, quality rating and improvement systems, early childhood health data, and K-12 data. Prioritize workforce data system development and improvement in state CCDF plans.
- Join with other state leaders to encourage federal leaders to:
  - Establish common fields to be used across datasets to ensure comparability;
  - Resolve long-standing inadequacies in all federally funded datasets that include data on early educators; and
  - Dedicate sustained funding for ECE workforce data collection, including a regularly implemented, national study that also provides state-level estimates.

## Financial Resources

- Identify the public funding needed at the state level to ensure ECE access for all children and families, as well as good jobs for educators.
  - Estimate the true cost of services that relieve the financial burden on families while also advancing preparation, workplace supports, and compensation of the workforce. The values-based budget estimates developed by CSCCE and EPI (see **Table 3.13**) are a good starting point to understand likely costs at the state level.
  - Determine the extent of the cost gap between existing resources and what is required to accomplish reforms.
- Create a plan for phased implementation. For example, an eight-year plan could include Phase 1: development; Phase 2: progression and learnings; and Phase 3: full implementation. Identify costs associated with each phase and incorporate data collection and analysis to facilitate learning and adjustments during the implementation process.
- Commit to securing dedicated, sustainable funds to enact reforms.
  - Develop an educational campaign to assist policymakers and the public in understanding the costs of building an equitable system and the benefits of this investment.
  - Support national proposals, such as a [“New Deal” child care infrastructure investment](#) , to increase the number and safety of community-based facilities. Funding for small center- and home-based programs to make needed repairs and improve ventilation is crucial to ensure a safe learning environment for children and a safe work environment for educators during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Prioritize ECE in state budgets in the absence of or in addition to increased federal funding.

## A Call to Action

Changing how our nation invests in education and values its early educators is a matter of justice for educators, their own families, and the children of the families they serve. It is widely understood that public financing must be increased dramatically because services are unaffordable for families, while early educators' low earnings undermine their own well-being and pose multiple obstacles to their ability to nurture children's optimal development and learning.

This changing national discourse presents an unprecedented opportunity to remake early childhood jobs for the 21st century. But it likewise carries a risk that lack of clarity and timidity on the part of advocates and policymakers will squander this opportunity to uproot a centuries-long status quo that relies on the good will and sacrifice of women who care for and educate young children with far too little regard for their needs or their contribution.

Across the United States, early educators face urgent worries about food, shelter, and other basic necessities, as well as inadequate supports on the job. And this situation has only worsened in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is time to ensure that the women who bear the burden of this system every day are front and center in its transformation.



“In spite of all that we know about the importance of child development, the funding for preschool programming nationwide is abysmal. It is virtually impossible to earn a living wage as a preschool teacher or child care worker in America, even though parents are struggling to pay the high costs of care.”

**ECE Teacher, Minnesota<sup>21</sup>**

TABLE 1.1

CSCCE

Overview of State Progress, by Policy Area

	Early Childhood Educator Workforce Policies					Family & Income Support Policies	
State	Qualifications & Educational Supports	Work Environments	Compensation	Workforce Data	Financial Resources	Income Supports	Health & Well-being
Alabama	Edging Forward	Not Available	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Alaska	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Arizona	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward
Arkansas	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
California	Stalled	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Making Headway
Colorado	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Stalled
Connecticut	Edging Forward	Not Applicable	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway
Delaware	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
District of Columbia	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Making Headway
Florida	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Georgia	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Hawaii	Edging Forward	Not Applicable	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Idaho	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Illinois	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Indiana	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Iowa	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled
Kansas	Edging Forward	Not Applicable	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled

TABLE 1.1 CONTINUED

CSCCE

	Early Childhood Educator Workforce Policies					Family & Income Support Policies	
State	Qualifications & Educational Supports	Work Environments	Compensation	Workforce Data	Financial Resources	Income Supports	Health & Well-being
Kentucky	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Not Available	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Louisiana	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Edging forward	Stalled
Maine	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making headway	Stalled
Maryland	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Not Available	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward
Massachusetts	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway
Michigan	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled
Minnesota	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled
Mississippi	Stalled	Not Applicable	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Missouri	Edging Forward	Not Applicable	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Montana	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Edging forward	Stalled
Nebraska	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Stalled
Nevada	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
New Hampshire	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
New Jersey	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Making Headway
New Mexico	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled
New York	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Making Headway
North Carolina	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
North Dakota	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled

TABLE 1.1 CONTINUED

CSCCE

	Early Childhood Educator Workforce Policies					Family & Income Support Policies	
State	Qualifications & Educational Supports	Work Environments	Compensation	Workforce Data	Financial Resources	Income Supports	Health & Well-being
Ohio	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Oklahoma	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Oregon	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Making Headway
Pennsylvania	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Rhode Island	Edging Forward	Stalled	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway
South Carolina	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
South Dakota	Stalled	Not Applicable	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Tennessee	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled
Texas	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Utah	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Vermont	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Edging Forward
Virginia	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Washington	Edging Forward	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway	Edging Forward	Stalled	Making Headway
West Virginia	Stalled	Not Applicable	Stalled	Not Available	Edging Forward	Stalled	Stalled
Wisconsin	Edging Forward	Making Headway	Stalled	Making Headway	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled
Wyoming	Stalled	Not Applicable	Stalled	Not Available	Stalled	Stalled	Stalled

*Note: Some states are listed as "Not Available" due to lack of data. States listed as "Not Applicable" under the Work Environments category do not have a QRIS or have a QRIS under development.*



# Endnotes - Introduction & Policy Recommendations

1. CSCCE calculation of women employees in the "child day care services industry" between February 2020 and August 2020. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020). *Data Viewer: Women employees, thousands, child day care services, seasonally adjusted*. Retrieved from <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/CES6562440010>.
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3. Whitebook, M., & McLean, C. (2017). *Educator Expectations, Qualifications, and Earnings: Shared Challenges and Divergent Systems in ECE and K-12*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/educator-expectations-qualifications-and-earnings/>.
4. As of 2018, the union membership rate was 4.8 percent of child care workers, compared with 14 percent for preschool/ kindergarten teachers and 45 percent of elementary and middle school teachers, see Hirsch, B., & Macpherson, D. (2018). *Union Membership and Coverage Database from the CPS. Union Membership, Coverage, Density, and Employment by Occupation, 2018*. Retrieved from <http://unionstats.gsu.edu/>.
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12. Early childhood as a developmental stage of learning for children includes the period from birth to age eight. However, existing education systems, policy structures, and professional organizations are typically bifurcated between those working with children age five and under/prior to school age and those working in the K-3 grades (age 5-8) school system. For more information, see Institute of Medicine (IOM) & National Research Council (NRC) (2015). *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/19401/transforming-the-workforce-for-children-birth-through-age-8-a>.
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14. Most states offered some limited additional funding to programs but not necessarily for educator pay, see **Financial Resources**.
15. In April and May 2020, North Carolina provided bonus payments of \$950 per month per full-time teacher and \$525 per month for each full-time non-teaching staff member, see The Hunt Institute (2020). *State COVID-19 Fiscal Supports for Child Care*. Retrieved from <https://hunt-institute.org/resources/2020/04/covid-19-policy-considerations-state-covid-19-fiscal-supports-for-child-care/>; Guidance updated in December 2020 listed further bonus payments ranging from \$240-600 per month during November and December 2020, see North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (2020) *COVID-19 Child Care Payment Policies*. Retrieved from [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/C/COVID-19\\_Child\\_Care\\_Payment\\_Policies.pdf](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/C/COVID-19_Child_Care_Payment_Policies.pdf); The New Mexico Essential Child Care Wage Incentive was offered to all staff/administrators at registered or licensed facilities during April, May, and June 2020. Full-time early educators were eligible for \$700 per month pay for each month worked, and part-time staff members were eligible for \$350/month. See New Mexico Kids (2020). *Child Care Wage Incentive Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.newmexicokids.org/coronavirus/wage-program.php>; New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (2020). *New Mexico Launches Incentive Pay Program to Support Child Care Professionals*. Retrieved from <https://www.krwg.org/post/new-mexico-launches-incentive-pay-program-support-child-care-professionals>.
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21. Quote from CSCCE survey of teachers. For more information about the study, see Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., Schlieber, M., & Phillip, G. (2019). *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality - Minnesota*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/teachers-voices-minnesota-2018/>.