IN WASHINGTON, there are 536,427 children age birth through five years; 59 percent of these children live in households where all available parents are currently working, and 25 percent of all Washington children are part of low-income families. It is widely agreed that the current early care and education system across states is woefully underfunded. The cost of services is out of reach for many working families, including those who earn middle-class wages. At the same time, large swaths of early childhood teachers — even those with college degrees — earn unlivable wages.

More than 15,880 members of the early childhood teaching workforce provide services to children in Washington.

### Selected Occupations Ranked by Earnings

- In 2015, the median wage for child care workers was $11.31, a 2% increase since 2010.
- For preschool teachers, the median wage was $13.37, a 5% decrease since 2010.

### Use of Public Income Supports (EITC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF)

- Child care worker families’ participation in one or more public income support programs: 39%
- Cost of child care worker families’ participation in public income support programs: $34.7 million
The Early Childhood Workforce Index provides a composite appraisal of the early childhood workforce in each state focused on: Earnings and Economic Security; Early Childhood Workforce Policies; and Family and Income Support Policies. The full 2016 Index includes a discussion and rationale for each category and spotlights successful and promising practices in selected states. To see how Washington compares to other states, visit our interactive state-by-state database. For an overview of data sources for the indicators listed above, see our guide to indicators.