

Early Educator Compensation

Technical Supplement: Non-Representative County Wage Estimates in California, 2020

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Introduction

Our [report on educator income and benefits](#) draws on findings from the [California Early Care and Education Workforce Study](#) to report income and benefits of licensed family child care (FCC) providers and center-based early educators. Our study was designed to provide a representative sample of wages at the regional and state level only. However, we recognize that local data can be powerful for planning and advocacy purposes.

In this technical supplement, we estimate wages at the county level or within groups of counties where sample sizes fall below our minimum threshold to report. **The estimates in this supplement are not representative and should be interpreted with caution.** The only exception to this rule is Los Angeles County, which we treated as its own region in our study design; these particular estimates meet our criteria for a representative sample, as do our other regional estimates.

To locate a county within a region, refer to the map in **Figure 1**. Our comprehensive findings, based on the regional and statewide samples, may be found in the [full report](#).

FIGURE 1. MAP OF CALIFORNIA REGIONS



Methodology

Family child care providers are self-employed and may not quantify their wages on an hourly or monthly basis. To estimate their take-home pay, we multiply their annual household income in 2019 by the reported proportion earned through working in early care and education. We adjust the household income for inflation from 2019 to 2020 using CPI-W for California from April 2019 to October 2020. **Tables 1, 3, 5, and 7** summarize our FCC findings by county or group of counties. Readers should exercise caution in interpreting FCC wage results as we are unable to estimate programmatic costs and revenues to validate the findings. For additional context on our methodology, please refer to the [full report](#).

For FCC wage estimates, we only report geographies with at least 20 responses on earnings. We do not disaggregate by licensed capacity (i.e., small FCCs, which serve up to eight children, versus large FCCs, which serve as many as 14 children). When necessary, we grouped contiguous counties in order to meet the threshold of 20 responses and report on as many counties as possible. For instance, Santa Cruz County had only 13 FCC responses about wages, so we grouped these responses with those of neighboring Santa Clara County for a combined sample size of 97 FCCs. In a few cases, groupings were not feasible, so a few counties' data appear only within the regional and statewide totals.

For center-based early educators, we asked directors to report their own earnings as well as the pay ranges of teachers and assistant teachers/aides. Self-reported teacher data may be found in the full report.

We provide the median hourly ranges for members of the teaching staff and the median hourly self-reported wage for directors/administrators in **Tables 2, 4, 6, and 8**. For center data, we exclude counties or groupings of counties from which we received fewer than 10 director responses. When necessary, we grouped contiguous counties with fewer than 10 responses in order to meet our minimum sample size. These tables also provide the sample sizes of directors per county who reported teacher wage estimates. Please note that not all directors provided a range for assistant teachers—in some cases, fewer than 10 directors. These counties are labeled “insufficient data” for assistant teachers.

Where possible, we use the same groupings of counties for both FCCs and centers. In some cases, however, the groupings add additional counties. For instance, we grouped “Nevada/Placer” for FCCs but “Nevada/Placer/Plumas/Sierra” for centers. In this case, we did not have any responses from FCC providers on wages in Plumas or Sierra Counties, so we do not include them in the FCC tables, except within the regional and statewide totals.

Evaluating Bias at the County Level

Readers should take the estimates with a grain of salt: bias is highly likely due to the small sample size within each county. For instance, a sample of only 14 center directors might disproportionately feature programs run by directors of the same racial or ethnic background. Public data are not available for us to compare our samples against the true composition of child care programs, with one exception: we compare the proportion of Head Start and/or Title 5 center contractors by county, using 2019 data furnished by the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCCRRN). We include a flag for this type of bias in our center-based wage tables, given that programs with a public contract tend to pay higher wages. Only data for center-based contractors are available, so we do not analyze bias in the FCC provider sample. **For both our center and FCC samples, other sources of bias are likely but unknown.**

We include a column titled “Head Start/Title 5 Bias?” in our center wage tables. This column identifies an “undersample” (too few) or “oversample” (too many) of these types of programs in our study data. Our threshold for labeling a sample as biased is a difference of 10 percentage points when compared to public data. For example: 45 percent of our sample are public contractors in a given county, compared to 34 percent in our analysis of CCCRRN data (oversample). The gap is 11 percentage points $[45-34=11]$. **Tables 2, 4, 6, and 8** provide estimation sample sizes and our analysis of contractors by county for reference.

Non-Representative County Wages in California: Northern Region

TABLE 1. MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

California Northern Region, 2020

Northern Counties	Estimated Range	Large FCC	Sample Size
Amador/Calaveras/El Dorado/Tuolumne	\$35,000 to \$50,900	45%	20
Butte/Glenn/Tehama/Yuba	\$15,800 to \$27,200	29%	24
Del Norte/Humboldt/Mendocino	\$19,700 to \$38,200	40%	25
Modoc/Shasta/Siskiyou	\$28,700 to \$37,800	75%	20
Nevada/Placer	\$26,800 to \$39,500	43%	21
Northern Region	\$24,100 to \$38,200	45%	129
Statewide	\$26,800 to \$38,200	46%	1,666



County-level FCC estimates are not representative and reflect an uneven mix of large and small FCC programs. Interpret with caution. The column labeled “Large FCC” describes the proportion of our sample licensed to serve up to 14 children, which typically corresponds to a higher income. To estimate FCC take-home pay, we multiply annual household income in 2019 by the proportion earned through working in early care and education, adjusted for inflation to 2020. Samples of fewer than 20 providers within a county are grouped with neighbors. There are insufficient or no data for Alpine, Colusa, Imperial, Lake, Lassen, Mono, Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Trinity, and Yolo Counties, except within the regional and statewide estimates. Because the data are not representative, sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown.

For comprehensive data on wages and benefits for the early care and education workforce, please refer to the [full report](#).

Non-Representative County Wages in California: Northern Region

TABLE 2. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR CENTER-BASED EARLY EDUCATORS

California Northern Region, 2020

Northern Counties	Directors	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Center N	Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors			
					CCCRRN HS/T5	Study HS/T5	Gap	Bias?
Amador/Calaveras/El Dorado/Tuolumne	\$20.00	\$14.00 to \$18.50	Insufficient Data	14	43%	20%	-23%	Undersample
Butte/Glenn/Tehama/Yuba	\$23.46	\$14.75 to \$22.00	Insufficient Data	12	44%	42%	-2%	
Colusa/Lake/Sutter/Yolo	\$25.86	\$14.47 to \$21.25	\$13.00 to \$17.22	16	32%	25%	-7%	
Del Norte/Humboldt/Mendocino	\$20.30	\$14.78 to \$19.96	\$13.26 to \$16.00	23	55%	47%	-8%	
Lassen/Shasta/Siskiyou	\$22.20	\$13.25 to \$19.83	\$13.00 to \$15.84	14	54%	50%	-4%	
Nevada/Placer/Plumas/Sierra	\$24.07	\$13.39 to \$20.00	\$13.46 to \$15.50	23	17%	22%	5%	
Northern Region	\$22.00	\$14.00 to \$20.00	\$13.00 to \$16.00	103	43%	35%	-8%	
Statewide	\$26.82	\$15.00 to \$20.95	\$14.00 to \$16.25	1,016				

County-level center estimates are not representative. Interpret with caution. Wages for teachers and assistants reflect director-reported pay ranges. Samples of fewer than 10 centers within counties or groups of contiguous counties are excluded. There is insufficient or no data for Alpine, Modoc, Mono, and Trinity Counties, except within the regional and statewide estimates. “Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors” refers to the prevalence of programs with a Head Start or Title 5 contract in our sample relative to 2019 data from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCCRRN). The “Bias?” column identifies an “undersample” (too few) or “oversample” (too many) of these types of programs in our study data. Because the data are not representative, additional sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown. Our threshold for labeling a sample as biased is a difference of at least 10 percentage points when compared to public data. For example, 45 percent of our sample are public contractors in a given county, compared to 34 percent in our analysis of CCCRRN data (oversample). The gap is 11 percentage points [45-34=11]. We report this difference since wages tend to be higher in programs with a public contract.

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Non-Representative County Wages in California: Bay Area

TABLE 3. MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

California Bay Area Region, 2020

Bay Area County/Counties	Estimated Range	Large FCC	Sample Size
Alameda	\$30,900 to \$45,600	51%	83
Contra Costa	\$20,700 to \$42,200	40%	68
Marin/Sonoma	\$35,000 to \$46,400	35%	37
Napa/Solano	\$26,800 to \$42,200	43%	23
San Francisco	\$30,600 to \$42,200	26%	61
San Mateo	\$37,600 to \$53,900	50%	42
Santa Clara/Santa Cruz	\$40,200 to \$56,200	66%	97
Bay Area Region	\$30,900 to \$45,600	46%	411
Statewide	\$26,800 to \$38,200	46%	1,666

County-level FCC estimates are not representative and reflect an uneven mix of large and small FCC programs. Interpret with caution.

The column labeled “Large FCC” describes the proportion of our sample licensed to serve up to 14 children, which typically corresponds to a higher income. To estimate FCC take-home pay, we multiply annual household income in 2019 by the proportion earned through working in early care and education, adjusted for inflation to 2020. Samples of fewer than 20 providers within a county are grouped with neighbors. Because the data are not representative, sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown.

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Non-Representative County Wages in California: Bay Area

TABLE 4. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR CENTER-BASED EARLY EDUCATORS

California Bay Area Region, 2020

Bay Area County/Counties	Directors	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Center N	Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors			
					CCCRRN HS/T5	Study HS/T5	Gap	Bias?
Alameda	\$31.13	\$18.00 to \$25.00	\$16.00 to \$19.00	51	25%	11%	-14%	Undersample
Contra Costa	\$28.74	\$16.50 to \$24.00	\$15.00 to \$17.27	36	23%	22%	-1%	
Marin/Sonoma	\$28.00	\$16.75 to \$23.00	\$15.00 to \$18.00	39	22%	23%	1%	
Napa/Solano	\$25.00	\$15.00 to \$20.00	Insufficient Data	13	35%	7%	-29%	Undersample
San Francisco	\$38.31	\$20.00 to \$28.00	\$19.00 to \$20.00	34	27%	20%	-7%	
San Mateo	\$35.44	\$21.00 to \$28.00	\$19.00 to \$25.00	20	22%	29%	7%	
Santa Clara	\$33.00	\$18.00 to \$27.25	\$17.00 to \$20.00	60	19%	15%	-4%	
Santa Cruz	\$24.84	\$15.00 to \$25.00	Insufficient Data	11	32%	17%	-15%	Undersample
Bay Area Region	\$30.87	\$18.00 to \$25.00	\$16.00 to \$19.00	264	25%	18%	-7%	
Statewide	\$26.82	\$15.00 to \$20.95	\$14.00 to \$16.25	1,016				

County-level center estimates are not representative. Interpret with caution. Wages for teachers and assistants reflect director-reported pay ranges. Samples of fewer than 10 centers within counties or groups of contiguous counties are excluded. “Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors” refers to the prevalence of programs with a Head Start or Title 5 contract in our sample relative to 2019 data from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCCRRN). The “Bias?” column identifies an “undersample” (too few) or “oversample” (too many) of these types of programs in our study data. Because the data are not representative, additional sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown. Our threshold for labeling a sample as biased is a difference of at least 10 percentage points when compared to public data. For example, 45 percent of our sample are public contractors in a given county, compared to 34 percent in our analysis of CCCRRN data (oversample). The gap is 11 percentage points [45-34=11]. We report this difference since wages tend to be higher in programs with a public contract.

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Non-Representative County Wages in California: Central Region

TABLE 5. MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

California Central Region, 2020

Central County/Countries	Estimated Range	Large FCC	Sample Size
Fresno/Madera	\$26,800 to \$36,100	39%	49
Inyo/Kern/Kings/Tulare	\$22,700 to \$36,100	51%	73
Mariposa/Merced/Stanislaus	\$19,700 to \$30,100	44%	45
Monterey/San Luis Obispo	\$21,600 to \$30,300	45%	33
Sacramento	\$19,700 to \$36,100	40%	93
San Joaquin	\$30,600 to \$38,200	38%	37
Central Region	\$22,100 to \$36,100	43%	330
Statewide	\$26,800 to \$38,200	46%	1,666



County-level FCC estimates are not representative and reflect an uneven mix of large and small FCC programs. Interpret with caution.

The column labeled “Large FCC” describes the proportion of our sample licensed to serve up to 14 children, which typically corresponds to a higher income. To estimate FCC take-home pay, we multiply annual household income in 2019 by the proportion earned through working in early care and education, adjusted for inflation to 2020. Samples of fewer than 20 providers within a county are grouped with neighbors. There are insufficient or no data for San Benito County. Because the data are not representative, sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown.

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Non-Representative County Wages in California: Central Region

TABLE 6. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR CENTER-BASED EARLY EDUCATORS

California Central Region, 2020

Central County/Countries	Directors	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Center N	Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors			
					CCCRRN HS/T5	Study HS/T5	Gap	Bias?
Fresno/Madera	\$30.00	\$13.50 to \$18.50	\$13.50 to \$15.55	24	64%	45%	-19%	Undersample
Inyo/Kern/Tulare	\$20.00	\$12.10 to \$16.00	\$13.00 to \$15.00	23	48%	33%	-15%	Undersample
Merced/Stanislaus	\$22.99	\$13.50 to \$18.00	\$13.00 to \$14.00	16	57%	18%	-39%	Undersample
Monterey	\$26.06	\$15.50 to \$26.00	Insufficient Data	11	51%	55%	4%	
Sacramento	\$24.90	\$14.00 to \$18.50	\$13.00 to \$14.50	45	42%	8%	-34%	Undersample
San Joaquin	\$23.00	\$14.00 to \$17.00	\$13.00 to \$15.00	26	47%	24%	-23%	Undersample
San Luis Obispo	\$25.00	\$15.00 to \$20.00	\$13.00 to \$15.00	18	23%	0%	-23%	Undersample
Central Region	\$24.90	\$14.00 to \$18.00	\$13.00 to \$15.00	163	51%	23%	-28%	Undersample
Statewide	\$26.82	\$15.00 to \$20.95	\$14.00 to \$16.25	1,016				

County-level center estimates are not representative. Interpret with caution. Wages for teachers and assistants reflect director-reported pay ranges. Samples of fewer than 10 centers within counties or groups of contiguous counties are excluded. There are insufficient or no data for Kings, Mariposa, and San Benito Counties. “Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors” refers to the prevalence of programs with a Head Start or Title 5 contract in our sample, relative to 2019 data from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCCRRN). The “Bias?” column identifies an “undersample” (too few) or “oversample” (too many) of these types of programs in our study data. Because the data are not representative, additional sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown. Our threshold for labeling a sample as biased is a difference of at least 10 percentage points when compared to public data. For example, 45 percent of our sample are public contractors in a given county, compared to 34 percent in our analysis of CCCRRN data (oversample). The gap is 11 percentage points [45-34=11]. We report this difference since wages tend to be higher in programs with a public contract.

For comprehensive data on wages and benefits for the early care and education workforce, please refer to the [full report](#).

Non-Representative County Wages in California: Los Angeles and Southern Region

TABLE 7. MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Los Angeles and California Southern Region, 2020

Southern County	Estimated Range	Large FCC	Sample Size
Orange	\$30,900 to \$45,600	38%	52
Riverside	\$24,100 to \$36,100	43%	93
San Bernardino	\$24,100 to \$35,100	50%	56
San Diego	\$23,400 to \$36,100	35%	192
Santa Barbara	\$30,600 to \$39,500	33%	21
Ventura	\$27,800 to \$36,100	32%	40
Southern Region (excl. Los Angeles)	\$24,100 to \$36,100	40%	470
Los Angeles County	\$30,600 to \$38,500	58%	326
Statewide	\$26,800 to \$38,200	46%	1,666



Apart from Los Angeles, county-level FCC estimates are not representative; additionally, estimates reflect an uneven mix of large and small FCC programs. Interpret with caution. The column labeled “Large FCC” describes the proportion of our sample licensed to serve up to 14 children, which typically corresponds to a higher income. To estimate FCC take-home pay, we multiply annual household income in 2019 by the proportion earned through working in early care and education, adjusted for inflation to 2020. Samples of fewer than 20 providers within a county are grouped with neighbors. There are insufficient or no data for Imperial County, except within the regional and statewide estimates. Because the data are not representative, sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown.

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Non-Representative County Wages in California: Los Angeles and Southern Region

TABLE 8. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR CENTER-BASED EDUCATORS

Los Angeles and California Southern Region, 2020

Southern County	Directors	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Center N	Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors			
					CCCRRN HS/T5	Study HS/T5	Gap	Bias?
Orange	\$28.74	\$15.00 to \$21.00	\$14.00 to \$16.00	77	24%	7%	-17%	Undersample
Riverside	\$25.79	\$14.00 to \$17.00	\$14.00 to \$16.00	37	16%	31%	15%	Oversample
San Bernardino	\$20.00	\$13.00 to \$17.36	\$13.00 to \$14.00	35	50%	18%	-32%	Undersample
San Diego	\$26.50	\$14.75 to \$20.00	\$13.00 to \$16.00	112	29%	19%	-10%	Undersample
Santa Barbara	\$29.89	\$16.00 to \$22.00	\$15.00 to \$18.00	17	35%	22%	-13%	Undersample
Ventura	\$27.22	\$14.50 to \$19.00	\$14.00 to \$17.00	23	34%	16%	-18%	Undersample
Southern Region (excl. Los Angeles)	\$26.34	\$14.50 to \$20.00	\$13.50 to \$16.00	304	32%	18%	-14%	Undersample
Los Angeles	\$25.86	\$15.00 to \$20.55	\$14.50 to \$16.17	181	26%	24%	-2%	
Statewide	\$26.82	\$15.00 to \$20.95	\$14.00 to \$16.25	1,016				

Apart from Los Angeles, county-level center estimates are not representative. Interpret with caution. Wages for teachers and assistants reflect director-reported pay ranges. Samples of fewer than 10 centers within counties or groups of contiguous counties are excluded. “Proportion of Head Start/Title 5 Contractors” refers to the prevalence of programs with a Head Start or Title 5 contract in our sample, relative to 2019 data from the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCCRRN). The “Bias?” column identifies an “undersample” (too few) or “oversample” (too many) of these types of programs in our study data. Because the data are not representative, additional sources of bias in the wage estimates are likely but unknown. Our threshold for labeling a sample as biased is a difference of at least 10 percentage points when compared to public data. For example: 45 percent of our sample are public contractors in a given county, compared to 34 percent in our analysis of CCCRRN data (oversample). The gap is 11 percentage points [45-34=11].

We report this difference since wages tend to be higher in programs with a public contract. For comprehensive data on wages and benefits for the early care and education workforce, please refer to the [full report](#).

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Wage Estimates in California, 2020

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About CSCCE

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) was founded in 1999 to focus on achieving comprehensive public investments that enable and reward the early childhood workforce to deliver high-quality care and education for all children. To achieve this goal, CSCCE conducts cutting-edge research and proposes policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation prepares, supports, and rewards the early care and education workforce to ensure young children's optimal development.

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