

Profiles of the California Early Care and Education Workforce, 2020

Child Care Center Teaching Staff

Size of the Workforce

Approximately 83,800 lead teachers and assistants/aides work in child care centers in California. [Read more.](#)

“We are passionate people who work hard to bring positive changes in children’s growth and development before they enter kindergarten. The early childhood educator job is a real teaching job. We are not babysitters.”

– Center Lead Teacher, Bay Area

Estimated Teaching Workforce Size in Child Care Centers
California, 2020

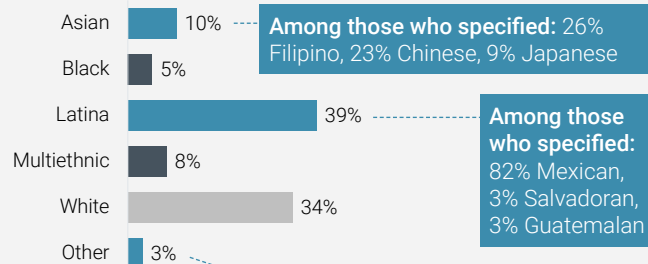
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	Lead Teachers	Assistants/Aides
Head Start/Early Head Start	6,900	5,800
Title 5 (including California State Preschool)	7,800	6,300
All other programs	46,100	10,900
Statewide	60,800	23,000

Demographics

Most center teaching staff are people of color (66%). Nearly all (98%) are women. [Read more.](#)

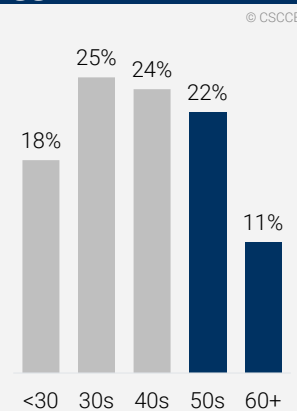
66% of teaching staff are people of color



Other teaching staff include **American Indians/Alaskan Natives** (Cherokee, Chumash, Navajo, and others), **Middle Eastern/North Africans** (Egyptian, Iranian/Persian, Lebanese, and others), and **Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders**.

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33% are 50 or older



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48% speak other languages



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64% married/living with a partner

52% have children under age 18

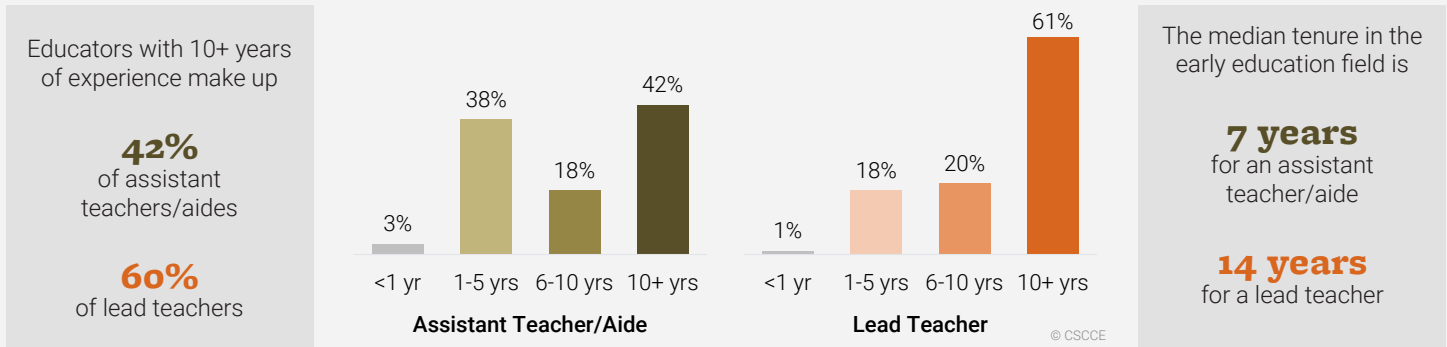
28% born outside the U.S.

“Working with children does have its challenges, but also rewards... especially when you can actually see their progress.”
– Center Assistant Teacher, Central Valley

“We are not appreciated by society even [though] we do the important job of brain development of young children.”
– Center Lead Teacher, Southern California

Education and Experience

Many educators have a long tenure in the field and a degree. One quarter (23%) belong to a union. [Read more.](#)



Educators with 10+ years of experience make up

42% of assistant teachers/aides

60% of lead teachers

The median tenure in the early education field is

7 years for an assistant teacher/aide

14 years for a lead teacher

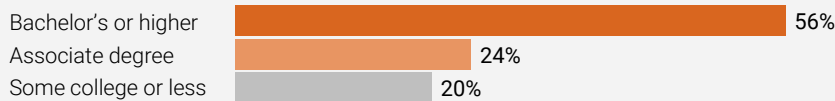
Lead teachers and assistants often hold degrees. Among educators with a bachelor's degree or higher, around one half also **majored in child development or early childhood education**. Nearly all center-based educators with an associate degree as their highest level of education majored in those disciplines.

Assistant Teacher/Aide



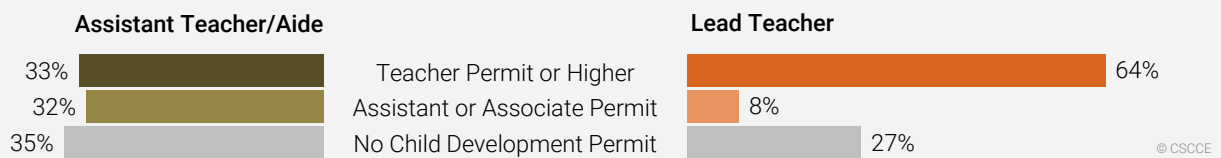
46% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher
86% of those with an associate degree
majored in child dev. or early childhood ed.

Lead Teacher



58% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher
90% of those with an associate degree
majored in child dev. or early childhood ed.

Center-based lead teachers and assistants frequently hold California Child Development Permits (around 65% of assistants and 73% of lead teachers). Permits are often at the Teacher level or higher, even among educators working in assistant or aide roles.



“Parents now value us as caregivers of their children, since they lived the experience of being parents and teachers at the same time of their children during the mandatory confinement of the pandemic.”

– Center Assistant Teacher, Southern California

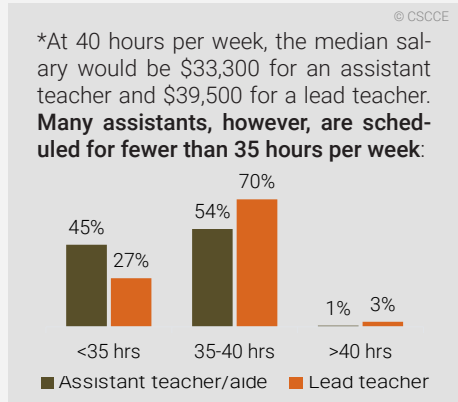
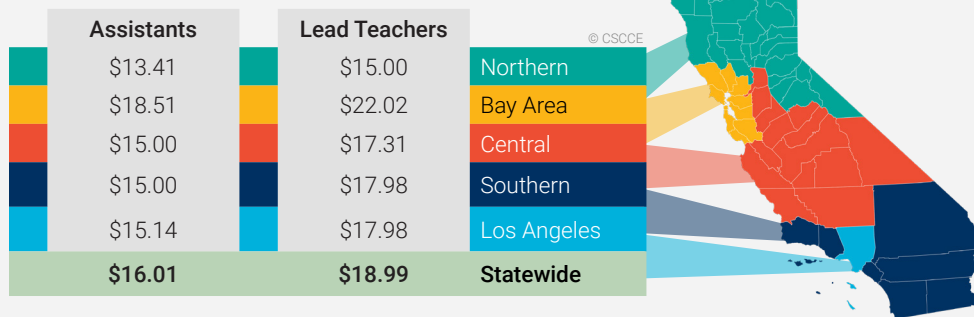
“I am usually the first teacher many students have. Therefore, I usually catch any special need issues and refer students to get the assistance that they need before families even realize that their child may need it.”

– Center Lead Teacher, Southern California

Compensation

In 2020, median hourly wages in child care centers were \$16 for an assistant teacher and \$19 for a lead teacher. The California minimum wage for employers with at least 5 employees was \$14. [Read the full report.](#)

Hourly Wages of Center-Based Early Educators in California*
By Job Role



Half of child care centers offer **retirement** benefits, and most provide at least one form of **paid time off** (sick, vacation, or holiday).

Retirement savings from any source:

- 50%** of lead teachers
- 39%** of assistants/aides

95% of center teaching staff have some form of paid time off (sick, vacation, or holiday)

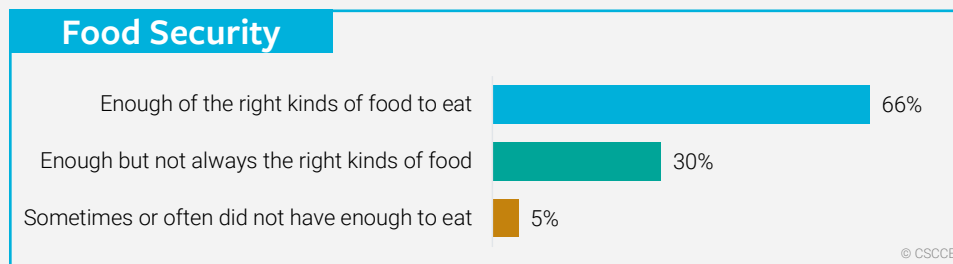
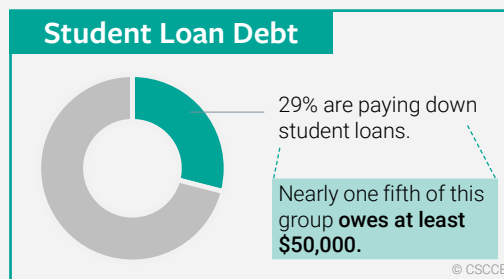
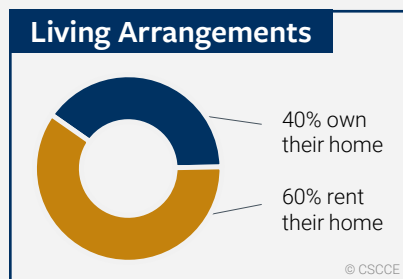
Around 7 out of 10 child care centers offer **health benefits** to lead teachers and one half offer them to assistants. Ultimately, 93% of lead teachers and 91% of assistants enroll in plans from any source.

Source	Assistant teacher/aide	Lead teacher
Employer	47%	58%
Spouse	22%	23%
Medi-Cal	22%	10%
Other Source**	11%	12%

** Includes Covered California, direct purchase, and Medicare.

Economic Well-Being

Two thirds of center teaching staff worry about covering their family's bills. [Read our report.](#)



“As preschool teachers we are not paid enough for all the schooling and hard work in order to make ends [meet] on our own. If I were to lose my spouse, I could not rent a home or studio on my own without having to work a second job.”

– Center Lead Teacher, Los Angeles

“I share my house with my daughter and her husband because without their support, I cannot afford rent.”

– Center Asst. Teacher, Bay Area