

State Actions on Early Educator Compensation

Lessons from the Bold on Early Educator Compensation Learning Community

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at UC Berkeley convened 20+ advocates and policymakers from seven states for the [Bold on Early Educator Compensation Learning Community](#) in 2022. Together, we shared challenges and strategies for progress on compensation for early educators. Insights from guest speakers advancing compensation progress in other places, such as Washington, D.C., supported our collective understanding. Read the [full brief](#) for key themes and lessons that emerged.

1. Act now and lay groundwork for compensation reform.



Vermont authorized \$6 million for quarterly retention bonuses for early childhood educators while 2021 [legislation](#) laid the groundwork for systemwide reform of the state's child care system.



New Mexico delivered direct payments to the workforce as a pandemic relief strategy and, more recently, allocated American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for a [\\$3/hour](#) wage increase for all early childhood staff (including non-teaching personnel, in licensed centers and home-based programs) in recognition of the low pay across the field.

Implement an equitable salary scale.

North Carolina ARP grants included increased [funding](#) for compensation with an option to spend it on increased base pay for employees using the agency's [model salary scale](#). The grant also implemented an equity adjustment to the base [stabilization](#) grant amount for programs serving a higher percentage of infants and toddlers.



Washington, D.C., has an [Early Childhood Educator Equitable Compensation Task Force](#) that created a salary scale with gradation based on role, credentials, and experience across home- and center-based programs to be implemented with funding starting in FY2023.



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Ensure access to benefits.



Washington, D.C., allocated funds to cover early childhood educators under [HealthCare4ChildCare](#).



Washington State continues to cover [healthcare premiums](#) for employees of licensed child care facilities, an initiative they started with ARP funds and plan to continue in 2023 with additional state subsidies.



Kentucky ensures that all early childhood professionals working in a regulated licensed center or certified family child care home are [automatically eligible](#) for child care subsidies through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), regardless of their household income.

2. Dedicate funds.

New Mexico permanently enshrined annual state funding for early childhood education through the [Land Grant Permanent Fund](#).



Washington, D.C., established the [Early Educator Pay Equity Fund](#).



Leverage cost models.



New Mexico used the state's cost model to [increase subsidy rates](#).



In **Washington, D.C.**, the [final recommendations](#) from the Early Childhood Educator Equitable Compensation Task Force used a [2021 cost model](#) to estimate the cost of implementing a salary scale that would raise wages across the field.

Implement a funding mechanism that can address compensation.

Illinois intentionally expanded their [use of contracts to increase compensation](#), in part through the [ExceleRate](#) pilot project funded with a Preschool Development Birth-Five (PDG B-5) grant.



Massachusetts put a total of \$400 million into an [operational grant program](#) that extends the C3 ARP stabilization grants through June 2023.



3. Center educator voices.



Educator-led groups like WECAN are [powerful advocates](#) in **Wisconsin**.



State agencies and community-based organizations can create spaces to engage educators, like the network created by **Wisconsin** [Shared Services Alliance](#), the regular open phone calls hosted during the pandemic by the **New Mexico** [Early Childhood Education and Care Department](#), or the daily calls hosted by [Strategies for Children](#) in **Massachusetts**.



In **Washington State**, Child Care Aware of Washington is engaging educators around compensation policy using the National Equity Project's [liberatory design framework](#).

4. Build capacity for outreach with equity in mind.

Illinois streamlined access and applications to COVID-19 relief programs to reduce administrative burden for providers navigating the system.



Build capacity and infrastructure for data collection, analysis, and reporting.



North Carolina collected [data](#) on their ARP stabilization grants so they could report how much of the grant was used for compensation. As of Fall 2022, they reported that ARP grants reached more than 3,000 programs, with more than \$170 million going to compensation in centers and \$9 million to compensation in family child care.



Delaware legislated an [annual workforce study](#) including demographics, estimated cost to close the gap between current compensation, and a target wage scale.

5. Take a holistic approach.

The Washington, D.C., Council passed the [Birth to Three Act \(2018\)](#) calling for publicly funded early educator pay parity with elementary public school teachers with equivalent roles, credentials, and experience. Starting in October 2022, the Act requires [reimbursement rates to providers be based on a cost model](#) that incorporates an updated salary scale.



Since the compensation aspect of the 2018 legislation remained unfunded and child care subsidy is not sufficient to raise pay across the field, a local [revenue](#) was [authorized](#) to fund educator pay equity and a task force for early childhood educator pay equity convened in 2021.

The task force advanced recommendations for historically significant one-time direct payments to educators and a long-term [plan to raise pay to parity](#) for all early educators (including infant-toddler teachers). Not stopping at pay, they pushed for funding for [health benefits](#) and continue to improve workforce data to understand and disrupt inequities in compensation and work environments.