



# From Unlivable Wages to Just Pay for Early Educators

**Center for the Study of Child Care Employment**  
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment  
University of California, Berkeley





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# From Unlivable Wages to Just Pay for Early Educators

By Caitlin McLean, Marcy Whitebook, and Eunice Roh

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Center for the Study of Child Care Employment  
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment  
University of California, Berkeley  
2521 Channing Way #5555, Berkeley, CA 94720  
(510) 643-8293  
[cscce.berkeley.edu](http://cscce.berkeley.edu)

Established in 1999, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) is focused on achieving comprehensive public investments that enable the early childhood workforce to deliver high-quality care and education for all children. To achieve this goal, CSCCE conducts research and policy analysis about the characteristics of those who care for and educate young children and examines policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation prepares, supports, and rewards these early educators to ensure young children's optimal development. CSCCE provides research and expert analysis on topics that include: compensation and economic insecurity among early educators; early childhood teacher preparation, access to educational opportunities, and work environments; and early childhood workforce data sources and systems. CSCCE also works directly with policymakers and a range of national, state, and local organizations to assess policy proposals and provide technical assistance on implementing sound early care and education workforce policy.

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# 1 Introduction

Teaching in early care and education (ECE) programs is one of the lowest-paid occupations in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, median wages for early educators ranged from \$10.72 per hour (or \$22,290 full-time per year) to \$13.94 per hour (or \$28,990 full-time per year).<sup>3</sup> These are quite literally poverty-level wages: the federal poverty threshold for a family of four in 2017 was \$24,600.<sup>4</sup>

Low wages for early educators are not a new challenge. Compensation has been low in this field since its inception,<sup>5</sup> but only recently have the public, policymakers, and other stakeholders begun to appreciate the full ramifications of paying such low wages for this crucial work — work that is performed mostly by women, nearly half of whom are women of color. Polls have shown that the general public understands the problem and is willing to pay for higher wages for early educators.<sup>6</sup> Candidates for office and elected policymakers are likewise waking up to the need for reform: congressional leaders have announced bills to reform early care and education, including paying early educators better wages, and governors in a variety of states have pointed to the need to invest in this field.<sup>7</sup> And a recent National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) consensus report outlined a cost model for a new vision of the U.S. ECE system, one that includes paying early educators similar salaries to their public school K-3 counterparts.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of this increasing awareness of the problems of low wages, a growing consensus within the early childhood field recognizes that something must be done to improve compensation. *Yet, little consensus exists on the primary reasons for compensation reform, what compensation reform looks like, and how to achieve compensation reform.*

“

**“I knew I was never going to be rich in this field. I just didn’t expect to be so poor!”**

**- ECE Teacher, New York<sup>1</sup>**

## NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

A wide variety of terms are used to refer to the early childhood sector and its workforce depending on the age of children served, the location of the service, 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. In some cases, we are limited by the labels used in a particular data source. For example, we refer to “childcare workers” and “pre-school teachers” separately where we report data that defines subcategories of the early care and education workforce according to the Standard Occupational Classification of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Proposals for reforming early educator compensation to date showcase fundamental differences in the rationale behind compensation reform. Is it primarily an issue of accountability for early educators (higher wages in exchange for higher qualifications, meeting specific quality standards, working with higher-needs populations, etc.)? Or are compensation increases justified in payment for the work already being performed as a matter of recognition for the critical nature of the job and for the significant experience and qualifications that early educators have already achieved?<sup>9</sup>

Such fundamental disagreements about the reasons behind compensation reform translate into a lack of consensus regarding what appropriate reform looks like. How large of an increase is needed? How should early educators receive additional income? There are also questions about how compensation reform is to be achieved. Will setting higher qualifications lead to higher compensation by default or are explicit compensation requirements needed? Should advocacy for compensation reform be couched primarily in terms of benefits to children? Or is it also crucial to acknowledge that early educators have needs, too, and should they be likewise supported to assert these needs during calls for reform?

Competing views on the primary reasons for compensation reform, what compensation reform looks like, and how to achieve compensation reform have led to the promotion of a variety of initiatives labeled “compensation strategies,” some of which do not actually raise on-the-job earnings at all, as discussed later in this report.

In the hopes of offering clarification and guidance, this report summarizes recent research on wage standards and critically assesses existing initiatives commonly intended to address the problem of low wages in ECE. The report also outlines the position of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) along the three core areas of debate, as summarized here:

- **Why we need compensation reform:** Real compensation reform is required as a matter of social justice for early educators themselves and not only because it will also benefit the children in their care.
- **What compensation reform looks like:** Compensation reform should aim for livable wages for anyone working with young children and decent wages at least on par with educators of older children for those with higher qualifications and greater responsibilities. Real compensation reform requires increases in actual wages and salaries paid for performing the normal work of early educator jobs. Changes to ongoing pay are needed in order to ensure economic security to early educators: they need reliable, predictable raises in their hourly wages or annual salaries in order to plan their financial futures, not just an occasional income boost in exchange for going over and above the work they already do.
- **How to achieve compensation reform:** A combination of increased and more stable public funding for the early care and education system as a whole, explicit requirements for minimum compensation standards, and an organized collective voice for early educators offer the most promising way forward.



# 2 Why We Need Compensation Reform: Low Compensation for Early Educators Is Unjust, and It Affects Us All

The consequences of low pay for early educators are many and disquieting. Low compensation results in economic vulnerability for those who do this crucial work — work that is performed mostly by women, nearly half of whom are women of color — and makes it more difficult for early educators to engage in the high-quality teacher-child interactions that matter most for facilitating children’s learning. Poor compensation also makes it more difficult to recruit and retain early educators, and without sufficient qualified early educators, there can be no provision of the early education services that children, families, and the wider economy rely on from day to day.

## Teachers of Young Children Cannot Afford the Basic Necessities of Life

While low pay for working in early childhood is not a recent phenomenon, an increasing body of research has documented the economic insecurity that early educators face on a daily basis, bringing a heightened awareness of just how low compensation is in this field. CSCCE’s *Early Childhood Workforce Index* regularly reports the high percentage of child care worker families who rely on public income support and health care programs, such as the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as “food stamps”; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). These programs are targeted toward the lowest-earning households in the United States. The latest data available show that more than one-half (53 percent) of child care worker families and 43 percent of preschool and kindergarten teacher<sup>10</sup> families rely on these programs in order to make ends meet.<sup>11</sup> These numbers are substantially higher than for elementary and middle school teachers (21 percent) as well as the U.S. workforce more generally (21 percent).<sup>12</sup> The majority of these child care workers work full-time (60 percent), and roughly one in eight holds a bachelor’s degree (12 percent).<sup>13</sup>

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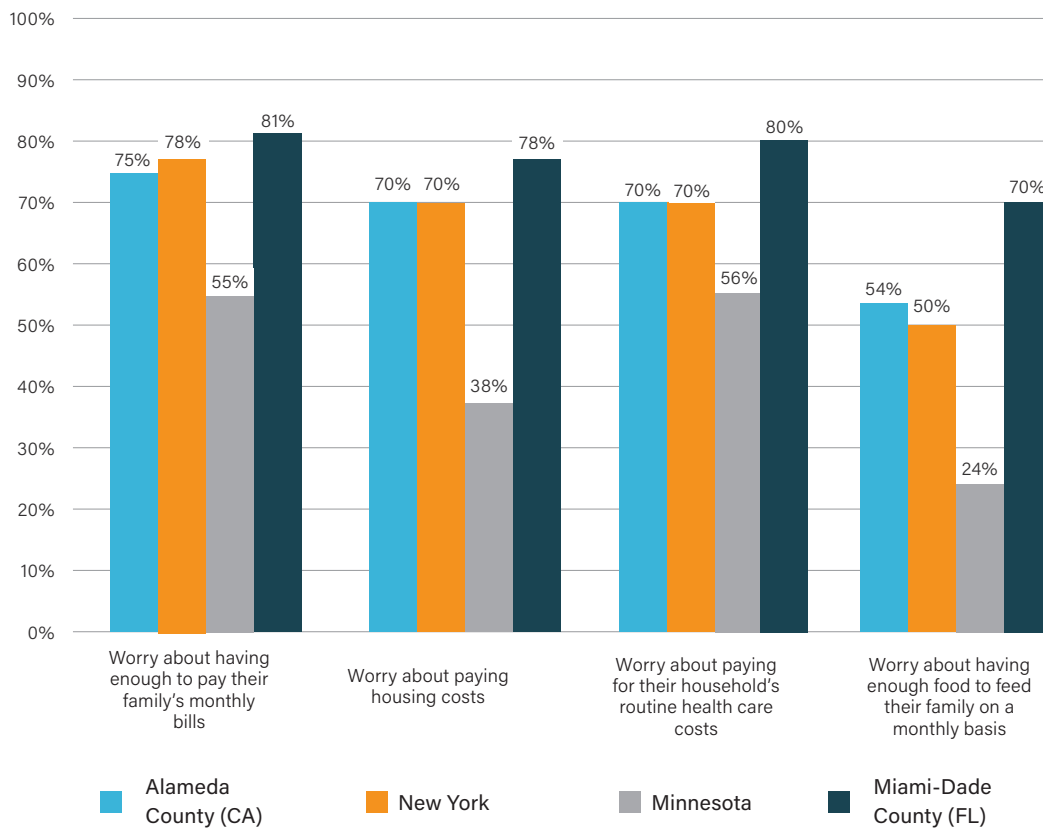
**"As much as I love my job and want to ensure that every child gets a quality education, I struggle to provide for my own family, making poverty-level pay."  
- ECE Assistant Teacher, New York<sup>14</sup>**

CSCCE’s SEQUAL<sup>16</sup> studies in several states have further documented the impact low wages have on teacher well-being, particularly in the form of high degrees of economic worry, including worrying about paying monthly bills, housing costs, routine health care costs, and even the ability to feed their families (see **Figure 1**). The percentage of early educators reporting economic worry in the Minnesota SEQUAL study is substantially lower than in the other three states that have taken part in this study to date. This finding may reflect the relatively higher median wages of early educators and lower cost of living in Minnesota statewide, as reported in the *2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index*.<sup>17</sup>

“**My job is important to me. I enjoy it and I do it with love, but my family is important as well, and they depend on my economic stability.”**  
**- ECE Teacher, Florida (translated from Spanish)<sup>15</sup>**

**FIGURE 1**

**Percentage of Early Educators With Economic Worry in Four States**



Source: Whitebook, M., King, E., Philipp, G., & Sakai, L. (2016). Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley; Whitebook, M., Hankey, A., Schlieber, M., Austin, L.J.E., & Philipp, G. (2018). Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality — Miami-Dade County. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley; Whitebook, M., Schlieber, M., Hankey, A., Austin, L.J.E., & Philipp, G. (2018). 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; Whitebook, M., Schlieber, M., Hankey, A., Austin, L.J.E., & Philipp, G. (2018). Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality — New York. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

These findings are consistent with studies by other organizations. For example, a 2017 Arkansas study surveyed more than 1,200 early educators and found that nearly three in five (58 percent) reported having trouble paying for basic needs, such as rent, utilities, medical expenses, and/or transportation, in the previous year.<sup>18</sup> Another 2017 study of the early childhood workforce in Colorado found that 43 percent of teaching staff and 52 percent of family child care providers reported postponing medical treatment because of the cost.<sup>19</sup>

## Low Pay for Early Educators Perpetuates Gender and Racial Biases in the Labor Market

It is no coincidence that a field that has been dominated by women — nearly half of whom are women of color — is also one of the lowest-paid occupations.<sup>21</sup> Historic patterns of discrimination against women and people of color in the wider labor market have systematically pushed these groups into lower-paying jobs by limiting their access to education and higher-paying jobs.<sup>22</sup> Lower wages for women, in particular, were historically justified based on the pervasive, but factually incorrect, idea that women were not responsible for supporting a family, and therefore, women's wages did not need to be as high as men's.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, the cultural devaluation of care work in particular has been and continues to be used to justify lower wages for those who perform such work. Care work is commonly seen as unskilled or something that women “naturally” do, often for free. Perversely, low wages for working in early care and education are also sometimes seen as justified in exchange for doing personally satisfying work — the idea that early educators are “paid in love.”<sup>24</sup> As a result, there exists a pay penalty for working in care-related fields, which contributes to the wage gap between men and women.<sup>25</sup>

“

**“I work a bunch of overtime because we are so short-staffed, and I still don't make enough money to pay my bills. My car has been broken for almost a year, and yet I can't afford to get it fixed.”**

**- ECE Teacher, Minnesota<sup>20</sup>**

“

**Disrupting historical notions of early education and care as unskilled and of little value requires not only social recognition of the crucial work early educators perform, ...but real financial reform to the ECE system that allows for just compensation.**

Continuing to pay early educators poverty-level wages out of an expectation that women (especially marginalized 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 and racism in the wider labor market. Proposals for improving women's economic security and narrowing the wage gap between men and women often center on encouraging women to enter male-dominated fields, but this “solution” does nothing to solve the problem of low wages in care-related and female-dominated fields, such as ECE. Disrupting historical notions of early education and care as unskilled and of little value requires not only social recognition of the crucial work early educators perform, which has increased substantially in recent years, but real financial reform that allows for just compensation.

Even within ECE, there are systemic inequities in wages based on race. For example, African American early educators who work in child care centers are more likely to earn less than \$15 per hour than all other racial/ethnic groups in the early education workforce nationwide.<sup>26</sup> Even after controlling for educational attainment, African American workers still earn lower wages than white workers. Disrupting these inequities requires explicit strategies to mitigate patterns of discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities in ECE and the labor market more generally.

## **Efforts to Improve the Quality of ECE Services and Attract a Skilled and Stable Workforce Are Fruitless If They Do Not Address the Status and Reward Associated With Early Childhood Employment**

Much of the recent policy focus on early childhood education and care has emphasized the importance of high-quality services in order to promote children's development. Paradoxically, quality improvement initiatives rarely attend to the working conditions of early educators.<sup>27</sup> While common sense alone might tell us that "economic insecurity and the stress it fuels can undermine educators' capacity to remain focused and present and to engage in the intentional interactions that facilitate young children's learning and development,"<sup>28</sup> research has confirmed the link between higher economic well-being for early educators and higher quality interactions between teacher and child. In CSCCE's study of early educators in Alameda County, California, staff expressing significantly less economic worry and overall higher levels of adult well-being worked in programs rated higher on the CLASS Instructional Support domain.<sup>29</sup> When CLASS Instructional Support ratings are higher, teaching staff are more likely to promote children's higher-order thinking skills, provide feedback, and use advanced language, which stimulates conversation and expands understanding and learning. Other studies have similarly found relationships between higher levels of economic well-being among early educators and positive expression and behavior among children.<sup>30</sup>

Poor compensation and broader working conditions fuel a staffing crisis in early care and education. Low pay not only dissuades qualified professionals from entering the field, as they often have better paying alternatives in other fields, but also makes retaining a high-quality workforce difficult, resulting in high turnover rates across the field.<sup>32</sup> The link between poor compensation and low retention has been highlighted in multiple recent studies of the early childhood workforce in various states. For former early childhood educators in Arkansas and Illinois, inadequate compensation was the key determinant in their decision to leave the field, and in North Carolina and Virginia, educators reported higher pay as the top potential motivator to remain in early care and education.<sup>33</sup>

Churn within the ECE field leads to poorer-quality learning environments for children, as well as inequities in children's access to qualified teachers, as teachers move from lower-paid positions in some settings to higher-paid positions in others (such as public schools). Typically, early educators working with older children and in publicly funded settings earn somewhat more than

early educators working with younger children (especially infants and toddlers) or in settings that are largely privately funded.<sup>34</sup>

“

**“It is hard to be completely present in your teaching when you are constantly worried about other things such as how am I going to make ends meet or if your child is ok because you had to send them to school sick because you couldn't afford to stay home with them.”  
- ECE Teacher, New York<sup>31</sup>**

Improving program practices and sustaining quality is impossible when teachers regularly come and go, in part due to economic distress. Studies have demonstrated a link between high turnover and poor program quality.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, an inability to staff services with qualified individuals will not only prevent further expansion efforts to provide early care and education access for all children and families, but may threaten the provision of existing services. This consequence poses risks for employers whose employees rely on child care services and therefore may have ripple effects on the broader economy.<sup>36</sup>

# 3 What Compensation Reform Should Aim For: Livable Wages and Middle-Class Jobs for Early Educators

Making early education and care an attractive field now and in the future means fundamentally reshaping early childhood jobs to provide fair compensation and reasonable working conditions. 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 forward in the valuing of historically feminine work and toward a more gender-just society.

## A Matter of Justice: Livable Wages for All Those Working With Young Children

All those working with young children should earn at least a livable wage, which is higher than current minimum wage levels. Although what counts as “livable” is not universally agreed upon, standards do exist and are calculated based on the ability to afford basic necessities in a given community. For example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage Calculator “draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family’s likely minimum food, child care, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs [...] and the rough effects of income and payroll taxes to determine the minimum employment earnings necessary to meet a family’s basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency.”<sup>37</sup>

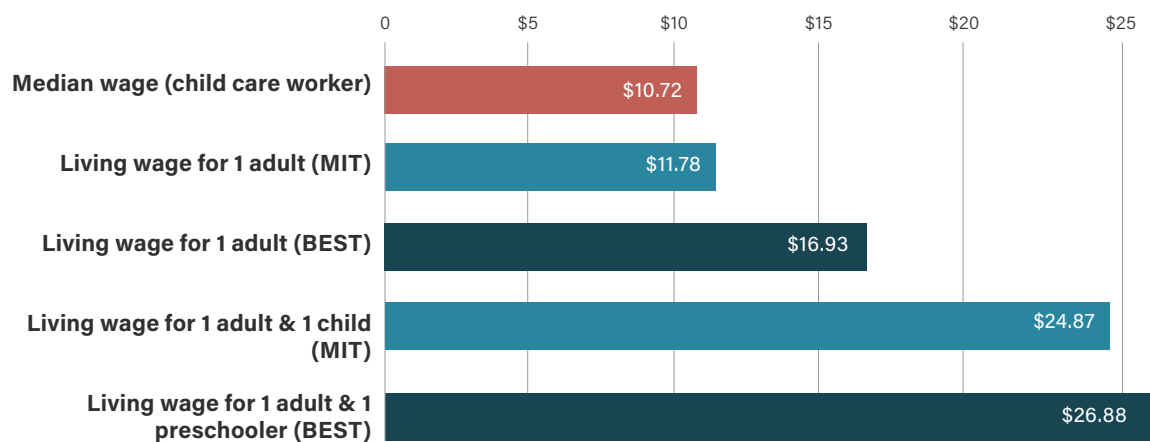
Currently, median child care worker wages in only five states meet this living wage threshold for even a single adult with no children (see **Appendix Table 1**). Median child care worker wages do not meet the living wage threshold for a single adult with one child in any state. These data, like teacher reports of struggling to afford basic necessities outlined earlier in this report, demonstrate the need for minimum wage standards in ECE, as well as public funding to ensure that increased costs are not passed on to parents in the form of additional fees. While this analysis focused on the state level for illustrative purposes, the Living Wage Calculator does include local estimates, which are crucial for setting wage standards that account for the sometimes-substantial variability in the cost of living within states.

“  
**Currently, median child care worker wages in only five states meet the living wage threshold for even a single adult with no children.**

The fact that child care worker wages largely do not meet the standards of a living wage is an especially sad state of affairs because MIT's Living Wage Calculator is a conservative estimate of the amount of money a person or family needs to function (see **Figure 2**). It is designed to assess the level of income needed for "minimum standards given the local cost of living."<sup>38</sup> Other standards, such as the Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST) Index, calculate not only the minimum needed for families to survive, but also to secure the basic savings needed for *economic security*, such as emergency and retirement savings.<sup>39</sup> By this slightly higher standard, median child care worker wages fall short in *all* states by between \$2.01 to \$14.20 per hour for a single adult without employer benefits, depending on the state (see **Appendix Table 2**).

**FIGURE 2**

### National Median Wage of Child Care Workers Compared to Living Wage Standards



Note: BEST standards used in this graph are for workers without benefits. The BEST Index also includes estimates for workers with benefits.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics. Retrieved from <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/>; Wider Opportunities for Women and the Center for Social Development at Washington University-St. Louis. The Basic Economic Security Tables Index. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/best/>; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Living Wage Calculator. Retrieved from <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>.

## Lead Educators Should Have Good Jobs With Good Pay, At Least on Par With Teachers of Older Children

While all ECE workers play important roles in caring for young children and should earn at least a livable wage, lead teachers need specific knowledge and skills to facilitate learning among a group of small children. Such training and experience should be compensated commensurate with standards for a middle-class, professional job, similar to educators of older children.<sup>40</sup>

Good pay and benefits are necessary, if not sufficient, markers of good jobs.<sup>41</sup> Yet, there is no standard benchmark of good or adequate pay. Typically, CSCCE has recommended that the ECE field begin with a benchmark of parity with K-3 teacher compensation for lead ECE teachers, given the similarities in the type of work and skills involved.<sup>42</sup> This recommendation was further reiterated by NASEM in the 2018 report *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*,<sup>43</sup> yet it is debatable whether elementary school teachers themselves receive just compensation for their work, depending on the state or locality, as recent teacher walkouts attest.<sup>44</sup> As a similarly female-dominated occupation, public school teacher wages may likewise be depressed by historic gender bias in the labor market.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, public school teacher median earnings in all states are currently considerably greater than early educators' median earnings.<sup>46</sup>

The Center for Economic and Policy Research has defined a "good job" as paying at least what the typical male worker earned in 1979, after which time wage inequality began to rise sharply in the United States, and median wages did not keep pace with increases in worker productivity.<sup>47</sup> Adjusted for inflation, this wage is \$20.75 per hour in 2017 dollars.<sup>48</sup> Under this standard, childcare and preschool teacher positions in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as nationally, are not considered good jobs, whereas kindergarten and elementary school teacher positions in all states and D.C. are considered good jobs, suggesting that achieving compensation parity between ECE and K-3 teachers would transform early childhood jobs into "good" jobs (see **Figures 3 and 4**). Center director wages are more varied across the country: in 30 states, median wages of directors meet the benchmark to be a good job, yet in the other 20 states, they do not.

This metric is simplified and does not take into account geographical differences in the cost of living, which is an important consideration for setting minimum salary requirements in practice. As a result, these national standards for the wages of a good job are likely underestimates in areas with high cost of living.

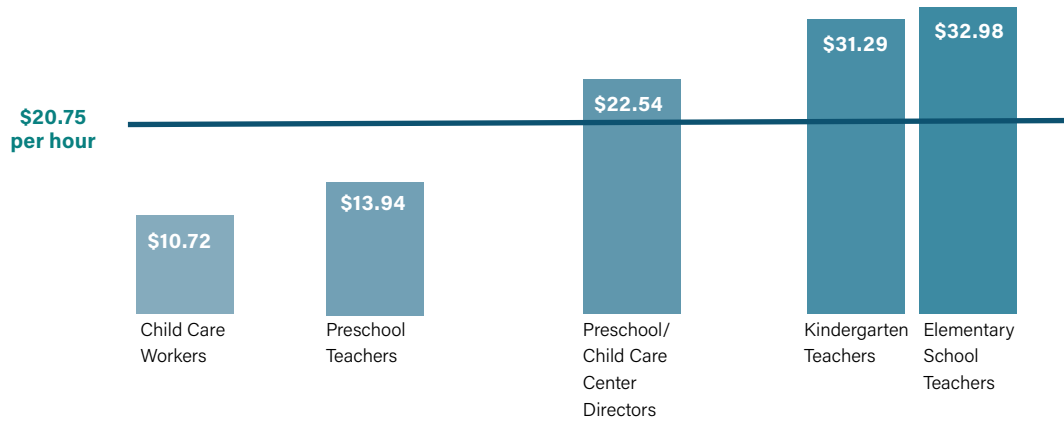
Although base pay is a crucial component of adequate compensation, other components also warrant attention, particularly within early care and education. As outlined in CSCCE's K-3 teacher compensation parity framework,<sup>49</sup> these components include paid time for professional responsibilities, as well as benefits (health care, retirement) and paid time off (sick leave, vacation, family leave). Early educators often are not given time during their paid work hours to complete crucial aspects of their job, such as curriculum planning, child assessment, and administrative paperwork, and many find they have to complete such tasks on their own time, making their already low wages and salaries even lower on a per-hour basis.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, benefits like health care insurance and a retirement package are often used as markers of good jobs,<sup>51</sup> but early educators routinely lack access to such benefits through their employers.<sup>52</sup>

“I spent 60 minutes at home tonight working on observations, and I worked for an additional almost two hours in the classroom, preparing the classroom, doing paperwork, preparing for tomorrow. I do not get compensated for any of this time. Last night, I was on the phone with a working parent about a child for 30 minutes. It's the fullest part-time job. Part time pay with zero benefits but full-time hours.”  
-ECE Teacher, New York<sup>53</sup>



FIGURE 3

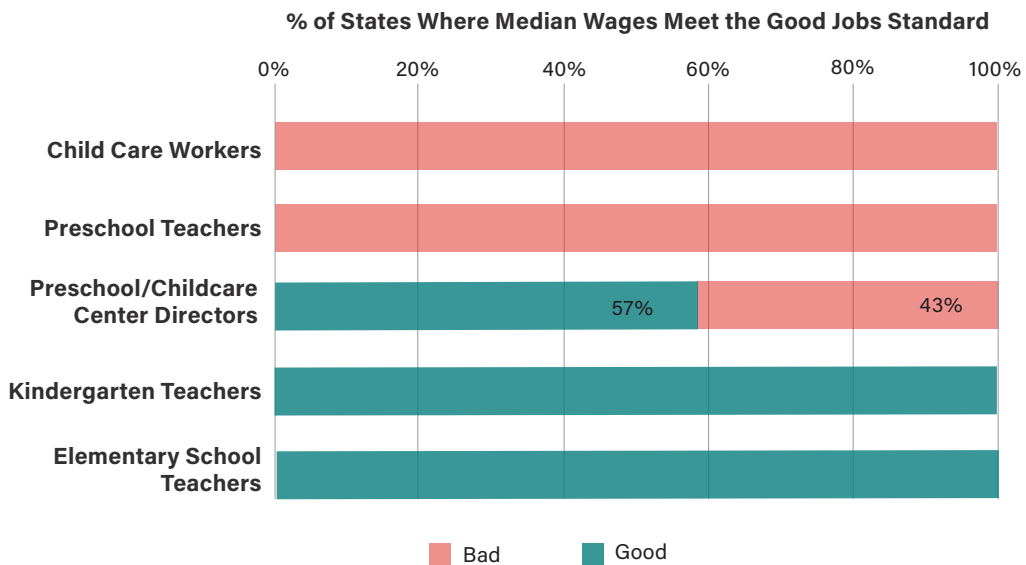
### National Median Wages for Early Educators and Kindergarten/Elementary School Teachers Compared to the Center for Economic and Policy Research's Good Job Standard



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Employment Statistics. Retrieved from <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/>; Schmitt, J. & Jones, J. (2012). Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone? Washington DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/good-jobs-2012-07.pdf>.

FIGURE 4

### State Median Early Educator and Kindergarten/Elementary School Teacher Wages Compared to the Center for Economic and Policy Research Good Jobs Standard



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Employment Statistics. Retrieved from <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/>; Schmitt, J. & Jones, J. (2012). Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone? Washington DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/good-jobs-2012-07.pdf>.

# 4 Are We Moving Toward Real Compensation Reform for Early Educators?

## An Assessment of Current Strategies

Compensation strategies or initiatives are those that increase workers' base annual salaries or hourly wages and/or provide benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans.<sup>54</sup> Such strategies directly improve teachers' paychecks on an ongoing basis.

Are existing strategies to improve compensation for the early educator workforce meeting or moving toward these goals? In many cases, they are not.

Only a few existing strategies aim to directly improve teachers' paychecks and access to workplace benefits on an ongoing basis, usually by means of required salary scales and/or minimum wages, and even these strategies currently target particular sectors or populations of the early educator workforce, rather than aligning earnings across settings and age of children to ensure that early educator wages are determined primarily by job role, education, and experience.

Other existing strategies, such as wage supplements via stipends and tax credits, are sometimes referred to as compensation strategies, but these mechanisms do not ultimately improve teachers' paychecks on an ongoing basis. Rather, they provide what essentially amounts to poverty relief by subsidizing low wages, similar to the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers more generally.

Scholarships and apprenticeships are also sometimes called compensation strategies but actually serve the purpose of providing educational supports for the workforce. Though these



**Compensation strategies or initiatives are those that increase workers' base annual salaries or hourly wages and/or provide benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans.**

useful strategies sometimes build in increased wages as an incentive, even these improvements are not sufficient on their own to achieve the goal of reasonable wages and benefits for ECE jobs. The raises provided are too small, they target small populations of the workforce, and furthermore, they require the existing workforce to meet additional demands and expectations in order to receive wages that still often fall short of a livable wage, much less the earnings of a good job.

This section discusses each of these types of strategies in terms of their ability to move early educator pay in line with what is required for a good job. For an overview of these types of strategies, how they differ, and some state examples, see **Appendix Table 5**.

## Existing Compensation Strategies: An Assessment of Their Strengths and Limitations

Two main mechanisms for improving compensation in the long term have so far been put into place for particular segments of the ECE workforce:

- Policies that require compensation parity with K-3 teachers for early educators working in publicly funded pre-K programs; and
- Minimum wage legislation or ordinances across occupations that increase earnings for early educators with the lowest wages.

While both of these strategies have seen some success in raising on-the-job earnings of some early educators, certain challenges and limitations remain, particularly given the currently insufficient and fragmented public financing of early care and education across settings.

### Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity

Currently, the most progress in moving toward adequate compensation for early educators has been in publicly funded pre-K programs, particularly for pre-K teachers who work in public school settings.<sup>55</sup> Several states now have explicit requirements that pre-K teachers with equivalent qualifications to K-3 teachers be paid equivalent salaries.<sup>56</sup> These requirements most commonly apply to teachers working in public schools, but some states (e.g., Alabama) have demonstrated that it is possible to apply these parity policies to publicly funded pre-K teachers working in community-based settings, as well.<sup>57</sup> As noted previously, based on salary levels, public school teacher jobs can be considered “good jobs” in most states. Therefore, on the basis of improvement to salary levels, strategies that have sought to peg early educator compensation to elementary school teacher compensation can be considered successful.

This strategy of increasing pre-K teacher pay in line with that of elementary school teachers has succeeded in large part because education for older children is an established public good and is largely publicly funded.

“Alabama has demonstrated that it is possible to apply salary parity policies to publicly funded pre-K teachers working in community-based settings.”

“

**“If I am being held to the same standards of teachers working in pre-kindergarten within NYC Public School, then I should receive the same compensation based on my qualifications. It is unfair to have a two-tier system for teachers that appears to be based on what type of building you are teaching in.”**

**- ECE Teacher, New York<sup>60</sup>**

To the extent that states and cities have been able to align pre-K with the public education system, it has proved easier to argue for substantial public funding, rather than relying on parent fees, and to make the case for equivalent standards for early educator qualifications and compensation, rather than the minimum necessary for health and safety, as prevails in the child care system. As a result, pre-K programs often benefit from higher funding levels and more stable funding mechanisms than in the rest of the ECE system (although per child funding for pre-K is still lower than for K-12).<sup>58</sup>

As a result of this movement, many (though certainly not all) pre-K teachers now enjoy salaries, benefits, and professional supports equivalent to their counterparts educating children just a few years older. While this gain is certainly a cause to be celebrated, most states still have no explicit salary requirements, especially for pre-K teachers in community-based settings. Many pre-K teachers are still earning considerably less than teachers working with older children, even when required to hold equivalent qualifications.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, publicly funded pre-K services currently only serve a fraction of children under the age of five in most states.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, relatively few early educators have the opportunity to work in these settings and to benefit from higher standards for compensation and other working conditions, where they exist. Expansion of pre-K services to younger children and on a universal (rather than a targeted) basis can help to grow the number of relatively well-paid early educator jobs and is one example of system reform that could support efforts to improve compensation for early educators (this option is discussed in more detail in the concluding section).

Alternatively, a parity strategy could be adopted in other types of ECE, such as Head Start/Early Head Start and “child care” settings, by implementing equivalent qualification and compensation requirements and, crucially, financing them adequately via publicly funded classroom- or program-level grants or contracts. Alabama adopted a similar strategy to ensure parity for their community-based pre-K teachers.<sup>62</sup>

**For more information on the opportunities and challenges of implementing a compensation parity strategy, see**

***Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons From Seven States and Cities.***

## Minimum Wage Legislation

At the other end of the spectrum is what might be termed a “floor” rather than a “ceiling” compensation strategy. There has been recent movement to increase the minimum wage for all workers, not only early educators. Many states and localities have pushed for minimum wage increases in response to a lack of movement at the federal level, where the minimum wage, set in 2009, is \$7.25 per hour.<sup>63</sup> If the federal minimum wage had kept up with inflation, it would now be more than \$8.60 per hour,<sup>64</sup> a level still generally considered too low to meet a living wage.<sup>65</sup>

Due to currently low wages, the early childhood workforce in particular stands to gain from increases in the minimum wage. Nationally, as of 2012 about 44 percent of center-based teaching staff made less than \$10.10 per hour, and about 75 percent made less than \$15 per hour.<sup>66</sup> There is some evidence that minimum wage increases in several states are linked to wage growth over the past two years for early educators classified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as “child care workers.” On average, states with no minimum wage increase saw an increase of less than 1 percent in child care worker wages, compared with an average 6-percent increase among states that did have a minimum wage increase.<sup>67</sup> As such, increasing the minimum wage can be a successful strategy to raise wages on an ongoing basis for a substantial swath of the lowest-paid early childhood educators across multiple programs and settings.

Nonetheless, a minimum wage strategy alone is insufficient. The compensation levels of current minimum wage legislation across states are not high enough to raise early educator jobs to meet even the lowest living wage standard (MIT’s living wage standard for a single adult), let alone middle-class status. The gap between the state minimum wage and the MIT living wage for a single adult ranges across states, falling short by \$0.22 per hour in Arizona and by \$6.61 per hour in Virginia (see **Appendix Table 4**). Nor do minimum wage strategies attend to the lack of workplace benefits like health insurance or retirement, as some pre-K parity strategies have attempted.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, by their nature, minimum wage strategies only target the lowest-paid early educators and do not address needed wage increases across varying levels of education and experience to avoid wage compression and ensure that pay is commensurate with skills and responsibilities.<sup>69</sup>

Lastly, minimum wage strategies must be coupled with changes to ECE financing in order to ensure that parent fees are not raised as a result of increased labor costs. Also, given the many groups involved in passing minimum wage legislation that affects workers across occupations, such reform is not guaranteed. Thus, minimum wage strategies must be considered partial at best and on their own are not an ultimate solution to low wages for early educators.

For more information on the opportunities and challenges of implementing a minimum wage strategy and necessary ECE reforms, see *[At the Wage Floor: Covering Homecare and Early Care and Education Workers in the New Generation of Minimum Wage Laws.](#)*

## Other Income-Related Strategies in ECE Are Not Compensation Strategies

Early educators' wages or salaries are shaped by many factors, including education levels and experience. Likewise, an early educator's *income* may include more than her paycheck and is similarly shaped by many factors, including household size and tax status. These facts have led to confusion about many other strategies that have at times been implemented with the intention of improving early educators' financial well-being, including tax credits and stipend initiatives as well as some apprenticeship and scholarship programs. As previously articulated in the 2018 *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, these strategies are not compensation strategies *per se*, as they do not necessarily guarantee increases to workers' base annual salaries or hourly wages and/or provide benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans.<sup>70</sup> A discussion of these types of strategies, what they do, and why they are not strictly compensation strategies follows.

### Financial Relief Strategies: Tax Credits and Stipends

In part due to the challenges of implementing initiatives that directly raise wages in private ECE settings, many states have turned toward supplementing early educator wages through stipends and tax credits (see **Appendix Tables 6 and 7** for details on specific initiatives). Stipends, such as the WAGE\$® program in North Carolina, offer cash awards to teachers annually or every six months on graduated supplement scales according to educational level and retention. Early educator tax credits, like those in Louisiana and Nebraska, supplement wages by providing yearly refundable tax credits rather than periodic stipends, but the two wage supplement strategies are similar in many ways.

Both initiatives provide early educators with additional income and therefore provide some financial relief from low wages, but the awards are independent of their regular on-the-job pay and thus do not fundamentally alter the compensation of early educator jobs. These supplemental awards must be applied for, and they come with eligibility criteria that limit who can receive the additional income — such as teachers working in certain types of programs, those serving particular groups of children, or those meeting specific education and training requirements — though the exact eligibility criteria vary by state (see **Appendix Tables 6 and 7**). In some cases, eligibility is attached to overall program quality, and so the initiatives reward or penalize teachers for conditions that are largely out of their control, namely whether or not their program has a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) rating or even participates in a QRIS.<sup>71</sup> For example, in Georgia, the stipend program requires that any participating educators not working in a public pre-K setting must work at a program that is quality rated, NAEYC certified, participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and serves at least 25% children receiving a child care subsidy. Furthermore, not all early educators who apply necessarily receive an award, despite being eligible (particularly under stipend initiatives that are capped at a certain funding level, unlike tax credit initiatives).

An analogy can be drawn between these types of wage supplement programs and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC provides a supplement to many low-income workers' paychecks for the purpose of providing *poverty relief*, not solving the problem of low wages. It is eligibility-based, not job-based, and when individuals are no longer eligible, recipients no longer benefit from that additional income. Like the EITC, ECE teacher-specific stipends and tax

credits have been implemented with the purpose of alleviating the financial stress caused by existing low wages but do nothing to change the problem of low wages itself.

Award levels vary substantially across the states, though they are typically limited compared with what is needed to move early educator earnings in line with the earnings of teachers of older children or to achieve a livable wage. The median minimum annual award across existing stipends and tax credits is \$500, the median maximum is \$3,000, and for programs that could provide data on average award amounts, the median average annual award is \$1,598. For illustrative purposes, an early educator earning \$10.00 per hour, working full-time, full-year, would earn about \$20,800 per year. If she received the median maximum amount, she would have about \$23,800 in total, including wages plus wage supplement, which is still short of the most conservative national living wage standard (\$11.72 per hour for one adult, or \$24,502 annually for full-time, full-year work). The higher award amounts are typically reserved for recipients with the highest levels of education (bachelor's, master's, or even doctoral degrees). Furthermore, the added income is independent of a worker's regular pay and does not provide an ongoing or dependable increase in income for the duration of employment. Indeed, some states have placed restrictions on how frequently early educators can receive supplemental stipend income, as well as the level of pay at which they may no longer receive an award (commonly set at around \$16.00 per hour).

Ultimately, only a fraction of early educators benefit from these awards at all. Only some states collect or report data about the early educators participating in wage supplement initiatives and the lack of quality data on the workforce as a whole in many states<sup>72</sup> makes it difficult to calculate an accurate percentage of early educators who have received an award in a given year. For those states that could report the number of award recipients, the median number of educators receiving awards for the most recent year available is 614 per state (ranging from 42 educators receiving stipends in Iowa to 6,303 educators receiving tax credits in Louisiana). In North Carolina, where the WAGE\$ stipend program was first implemented and where robust workforce studies are regularly carried out, 3,299 early educators received an award in fiscal year 2017, or approximately 10% of the state's licensed early educator workforce.<sup>73</sup>

Sustainability of ECE services requires that young people aspire to work in ECE, and they will require livable pay and better working conditions. How can we expect qualified individuals to be attracted to jobs in which they have to apply for poverty relief in order to support themselves and their families? While stipends and tax credits can and do provide financial relief for some early educators currently earning poverty-level wages, ultimately these are stop-gap measures and do not move the field closer to the goal of just compensation for early educators. In a world in which working in early education is adequately compensated, there will be no need for financial relief strategies at all.

In the interim, financial relief efforts can be useful as short-term measures intended to support early educators during a transition period. The Vermont Let's Grow Kids 2019 Legislative Action Agenda provides a concrete example of how to advocate for early educator tax credits, while being clear that these are not sufficient remedies in and of themselves, arguing for the need to "address the wage gap in the short term to provide immediate financial relief to early educators, while working to address root causes to create a sustainable system for families and early educators."<sup>74</sup>

## Educational Support Strategies: Apprenticeships and Scholarships

Educational support strategies are designed to support early educators to increase their qualifications. As such, they usually provide some monetary support (tuition/book costs, travel expenses, and/or computer/Internet funds) and may include non-monetary support (counseling, mentorship). Unlike financial relief strategies, these funds come with the condition of paying for the costs of educational attainment and are not a cash award. Educational supports for low-paid early childhood teachers are essential, as they help to prevent or reduce the financial burden of costs associated with continued education directly, as described above, or indirectly, for taking unpaid time off work in order to pursue professional development.<sup>75</sup>

However, in ECE, educational support strategies are sometimes confused with compensation strategies, in part because *some* existing educational support initiatives such as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships<sup>76</sup> and apprenticeships like the Philadelphia model<sup>77</sup> *also* include explicit compensation strategies in the form of incremental raises tied to educational achievements. Part of the funding in these initiatives goes toward supporting the leadership in ECE settings to provide incremental raises to staff. For example, the average increase in wages for bachelor's degree scholarship recipients across T.E.A.C.H. programs is 8 percent.<sup>78</sup> For a teacher earning \$10.00 per hour, that would be an increase of \$0.80 per hour, amounting to an annual salary of approximately \$22,464 for full-time, full-year work, still short of the most conservative national living wage standard (\$11.72 per hour for one adult, or \$24,502 annually for full-time, full-year work). Many of these individuals also gain promotions in line with their increased education.

By providing a pathway to somewhat higher-paying jobs within ECE, these initiatives clearly make a difference to the lives of individual early educators who are able to participate in them. Nevertheless, like financial relief strategies, they are not available to all early educators, and crucially, while they support some educators toward a somewhat less-precarious financial position, they do not fundamentally change the low-wage structure of early childhood jobs.



# 5 How Do We Achieve Compensation Reform?

Reasonable wages and benefits are a necessary condition for transforming early childhood jobs into good, middle-class jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nonetheless, while many existing income-related strategies in the ECE field are sometimes referred to as “compensation strategies,” they do not ultimately move us toward this goal. Indeed, by the nature of the outsized role they have played in ECE advocacy efforts to date, these other income-related strategies may have distracted the field from making greater progress. Even strategies that do directly raise early educator compensation to some degree, such as parity initiatives and minimum wage legislation, have been limited to improving pay for certain segments of the ECE workforce. Finance reform, including higher and more stable levels of public funding per child as well as expanded access to publicly funded services for children, explicit requirements for minimum compensation standards, and an organized collective voice for early educators together offer the most promising way forward.

## An Organized Collective Voice for Early Educators

Recent K-12 teacher movements demonstrate that change comes from the effective bargaining power of those most affected. Through strikes and walkouts, teachers have voiced their concerns to secure improved compensation and working conditions.<sup>79</sup> Organizing efforts in ECE have similarly been an effective strategy. In New York City, for example, unionized center-based workers and management negotiated a contract that included closing the wage gap between center-based teachers and public school teachers, increasing the minimum wage, and offering greater flexibility in health insurance and pension benefits.<sup>80</sup> Yet, organizing remains limited in early care and education. The vast majority of early educators are not currently represented on the job by a union or a professional organization,<sup>81</sup> and as a result, their voices are missing at tables where decisions are made that directly impact their practice and well-being. Representation in decision-making circles, where it exists, is often occupied by owners of small ECE businesses or large program operators, who are not necessarily the same individuals as the early educators in classrooms, particularly in larger center-based settings.

Lack of teacher voice is likely why most quality improvement efforts to date have focused on increased professional development and education for individual members of the workforce, while routinely neglecting the poor working conditions that hinder teacher practice.<sup>82</sup> Until early educators have a stronger collective voice, it is even more crucial that compensation strategies include an explicit accountability mechanism to ensure that increased funds intended to raise compensation are in fact used for that purpose.

As states advance reforms, consideration of whose voices are being heard and how to establish a process to include those who are absent in decision making is critical to building support for meaningful reform.

Wage boards in use in other industries and countries could offer one way forward. Wage boards are committees made up of representatives from the government, workers, and management in a particular industry, who are tasked with the goal of setting minimum standards for wages and benefits across the industry.

An example of effective use of wage boards in the United States is the recent convening of a wage board in New York, where representatives from the public, business, and labor ultimately helped pass a \$15 per hour minimum wage for fast food workers.<sup>83</sup> In states where support for wage boards and unionization is more limited, there are nevertheless opportunities to channel teacher voices, such as through strong professional associations willing to represent teachers in demands for better working conditions or through grassroots organizing to lobby legislators directly, as seen in recent K-12 teacher demonstrations.

## **Sustained Public Funding and an Integrated ECE System**

Existing compensation strategies have so far had limited impact on the degree of increased compensation for the workforce and/or the proportion of the workforce that has benefited, in large part because of a lack of dedicated public investment in the ECE sector. ECE services in general depend primarily on parent fees, and where public funding exists, it covers a fraction of families, generally pays considerably less per child, and is more likely to be paid to providers via less-stable mechanisms (vouchers rather than contracts), compared with public education for children only a few years older.

These issues compound difficulties in increasing base wages/salaries and benefits for early educators. Reliance on parent fees means that providers have historically kept prices as low as possible (though still unaffordable for many families) by paying their staff as little as possible. Public funding per child is inadequate and, due to strict eligibility requirements and low overall levels of investment, often only covers a small fraction of the children in a given classroom or program. As a result, increases (for example, to child care voucher reimbursement rates) do not necessarily have enough of an impact on a provider's overall revenue stream to cover the increased costs of substantial increases in staff compensation. And public funding based on targeted vouchers — which are largely dependent on factors that providers cannot control, such as families' eligibility and children's attendance<sup>84</sup> — is not stable enough for providers to confidently invest in ongoing increases to wages or better benefits.<sup>85</sup>



**“Raising base pay for the ECE workforce through contracts is the most direct way to ensure that adequate compensation reaches them and provides a predictable and steady increased annual salary for prospective and current educators.”**

**- NASEM, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education* (2018)**

Increased levels of public funding and, crucially, reform of existing funding mechanisms is essential for large-scale and long-term improvements to early educator compensation. Addressing the deficiencies of the current system requires a new financing structure for ECE, such as that proposed in the NASEM report, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*.<sup>86</sup> As stakeholders seek to improve services for children of all ages, they must break the silence on the financial costs involved in this process and promote understanding among policymakers about the gap between current funding and the additional resources required. Small *ad hoc* increases to public funding are not a solution. Transformative vision — and the financial resources to implement that vision — are critical to building a system that delivers on the promise of early education for all children and families.

Additionally, strategies to increase the amount and stability of public funding must be coupled with explicit strategies to address compensation. Funding strategies can increase the amount of revenue available to programs and therefore have the potential to be used to increase compensation, but increased funding alone does not guarantee higher wages for staff. Unless allocated resources are specifically designated for pay, program leaders may make other decisions about how to use increased funding to improve or sustain other elements of quality or to reduce fees for parents. Additional research is required to understand whether and how programs are using increased funding alone to raise compensation.

Efforts to grow the amount and sustainability of public funds must also go hand in hand with reducing the fragmentation of the ECE system. Current policies and proposed reforms often address only certain sectors of ECE. Segmentation by funding stream, often linked to the income of the child's family and the age of the child leads to irrational disparities in early educator wages that drive inequities in working conditions as well as children's access to well-qualified early educators. Streamlining funding and aligning standards across the birth-to-five age spectrum is crucial to an equitable compensation strategy for all early educators and equitable access to high-quality learning experiences for young children. As states advance reforms, it is important to assess whether changes are inclusive of all early educators or, on the contrary, may unintentionally increase fragmentation and inequities and/or create greater complexity for programs and other service providers.

## How to Move Forward?

Finance reform (including higher and more stable levels of public funding per child as well as expanded access to publicly funded services for children), explicit requirements for minimum compensation standards, and an organized collective voice for early educators together offer the most promising way forward.

Efforts to envision better workforce policies, including increased compensation, have been constrained in part by an assumption that change must fit within the confines of the existing ECE infrastructure and funding streams. Many existing strategies are limited by trying to insert them into a flawed system that is unaffordable for parents, inadequate and inequitable for children, and an enormous financial burden on the early educator workforce. Addressing compensation in the long term needs to be part of a larger discussion about moving to a system that works better for everybody.

## COMPENSATION REFORM REQUIRES GOOD DATA ON THE ECE WORKFORCE

Though there has been progress in recent years, data on the early educator workforce remains limited.<sup>87</sup> Accurate, up-to-date, ongoing data on the number of early educators, their wages/salaries, their access to benefits like health insurance, and how these variables differ by job role, education, experience, demographic characteristics, and geographical location, as well as age of children served and the type of setting/funding stream they work in, is needed in order to assess current levels of compensation and to budget how much funding would be needed to increase compensation toward a particular benchmark.

Investing in data systems and regular workforce surveys can support the case for better compensation for early educators. For example, recent implementation of parity policies for pre-K teachers in several states was bolstered by the ability to demonstrate high turnover and the inability to retain teachers in lower-paid community-based settings.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, the ECE workforce data deficit has led to an ECE workforce research deficit. Many efforts to increase compensation and even those initiatives that provide financial relief have not been systematically evaluated in order to assess their effectiveness or understand what improvements would enhance their effectiveness. Better data on the workforce, particularly built in as a component of compensation and other workforce initiatives, would make it easier to study these initiatives and confirm likely effects in terms of improved recruitment and retention.

**For more information on the opportunities and challenges of developing better ECE workforce data, see [\*The Workforce Data Deficit: Who It Harms and How It Can be Overcome\*](#).**

A robust public financing strategy is essential, but it is not a replacement for deliberate consideration of mechanisms to raise compensation. Though higher pay and benefits for the workforce will require additional public funding, resources alone are not a guarantee that compensation will be addressed in a sector that has been historically underfunded. Explicit minimum standards — based on job role, education, and experience, rather than the age of children or type of setting — can assist in moving toward more equitable, as well as adequate, compensation for early educators.

This goal is not impossible, nor is it an idealistic dream. While “rights, raises, and respect” for early educators is still a work in progress internationally,<sup>89</sup> other countries have demonstrated that publicly funded systems of early care and education are better able to deliver services that work for children, families, *and* the early educators providing the services.<sup>90</sup> In the United States, the public pre-K movement, like the kindergarten movement before it, further demonstrates that it is possible to value early education and care as a public good for children and families.<sup>91</sup> The voices of early educators as well as parents are crucial to continuing this process and to recognizing the need for better compensation and working conditions for all those facilitating children’s early learning, regardless of the age of the child.

Growing numbers of stakeholders across the nation recognize that the U.S. early care and education system's current organization and financing is unjust, and they are committed to advancing a public system of early care and education that is equitable for children, their families, and early educators. 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 21<sup>st</sup> century. But it likewise carries a risk that lack of clarity and timidity will squander this opportunity to uproot a centuries-long *status quo* of relying 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.

It is time to ensure that the women who bear the burden of this system each day — those who face urgent worries about food, shelter, and other basic necessities, as well as inadequate supports on the job — are front and center in its transformation. Because most early educators are not represented by an organization, building educator voice and ensuring representation at decision-making tables requires intentional efforts and planning. A well-considered, ongoing input and review process can inform the breadth and depth of proposed compensation reforms and intermediate goals, provided it includes all relevant expertise, including the teachers and teacher assistants (not only directors or owners of programs) who work directly with children every day. Stakeholders in San Francisco and Alameda County, California, and Cincinnati, Ohio, offer real-world examples of communities engaged in this process.

It is our responsibility as advocates to get it right, and we offer this paper in the spirit of making the most of this moment. Early educators need increased compensation for the jobs they already hold, including the education, training, and experience they already have, and not only in exchange for further increased training or education. And achieving this goal of increased compensation requires facing the reality that ensuring access to high-quality services for all children cannot be achieved in a system that depends on low-paid educators to subsidize it.

“

**“I spent most of my adult life teaching young children (three to five years old) in private international schools in various countries around the world. In those positions, I was paid a salary and benefits equal to those teaching in elementary or secondary school and given significant opportunities to pursue my own education and professional development. As a teacher of young children, I was respected and given very high status in the community. ...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>92</sup>

## Recommendations for Compensation Reform

- ▶ Articulate long- and short-term goals for increasing annual earnings of early educators as distinct from financial relief and educational support.
  - Ensure educators play a leading role in articulating goals and setting interim steps.
  
- ▶ Establish compensation standards for starting and ongoing wages, benefits, and non-contact time for professional responsibilities, including:
  - Pay scales for all teaching and auxiliary roles and education levels, using living wage/self-sufficiency standards such as those included in this report as a minimum; and
  - For lead teachers with bachelor's degrees, regardless of setting, the compensation standard should be at least parity with K-3 teachers.
  
- ▶ Ensure adequate public funding is available to meet articulated compensation standards.
  - Using the best available data (see **Compensation Reform Requires Good Data on the ECE Workforce, p.22**), estimate the cost of long-term compensation goals and use the estimate to determine intermediate steps as needed.
  - Build increased compensation into existing initiatives/program standards as a condition of public funding rather than creating separate *ad hoc* programs.
  - Use classroom- or program-level funding, such as contracts or grants rather than child-level vouchers or tax credits, to ensure that classrooms and programs are sufficiently funded to support teachers with adequate wages and benefits.
  - Include accountability mechanisms to ensure that funds intended for compensation reach the workforce.
  
- ▶ When proposing financial relief initiatives, frame advocacy messages to clarify that they are an interim strategy and not a long-term solution to achieve appropriate wages and benefits.
  
- ▶ Elevate compensation as an essential component of state workforce strategies and educate policymakers and the public at large about the importance of better pay in ensuring a skilled and stable early educator workforce.

# Appendix Tables

Appendix Table 1	Child Care Worker Wages Compared to MIT Living Wage Standard, by State, 2017				
State	Median Hourly Wage	Living Wage for 1 Adult (MIT)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult	Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Child (MIT)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Child
NATIONAL	\$10.72	\$11.78	91%	\$24.87	43%
Alabama	\$8.93	\$11.14	80%	\$22.23	40%
Alaska	\$11.99	\$12.48	96%	\$27.34	44%
Arizona	\$11.24	\$11.22	100%	\$24.43	46%
Arkansas	\$9.32	\$10.38	90%	\$21.71	43%
California	\$12.29	\$14.01	88%	\$29.68	41%
Colorado	\$12.60	\$12.47	101%	\$27.23	46%
Connecticut	\$11.87	\$12.88	92%	\$28.78	41%
Delaware	\$10.21	\$12.44	82%	\$26.11	39%
District of Columbia	\$14.33	\$17.11	84%	\$30.11	48%
Florida	\$10.09	\$11.75	86%	\$25.11	40%
Georgia	\$9.53	\$11.93	80%	\$24.00	40%
Hawaii	\$10.64	\$15.39	69%	\$27.18	39%
Idaho	\$9.04	\$10.64	85%	\$23.57	38%
Illinois	\$10.77	\$12.50	86%	\$26.22	41%
Indiana	\$9.62	\$10.70	90%	\$22.66	42%
Iowa	\$9.20	\$10.53	87%	\$23.23	40%
Kansas	\$9.25	\$10.69	87%	\$23.29	40%
Kentucky	\$9.28	\$10.49	88%	\$22.66	41%
Louisiana	\$8.95	\$10.91	82%	\$23.43	38%
Maine	\$11.18	\$11.60	96%	\$24.21	46%
Maryland	\$11.29	\$14.62	77%	\$29.41	38%
Massachusetts	\$12.74	\$13.39	95%	\$29.38	43%
Michigan	\$10.09	\$10.87	93%	\$23.12	44%
Minnesota	\$11.27	\$11.53	98%	\$25.62	44%
Mississippi	\$8.84	\$10.86	81%	\$21.29	42%

Appendix Table 1	Child Care Worker Wages Compared to MIT Living Wage Standard, by State, 2017 (continued)				
State	Median Hourly Wage	Living Wage for 1 Adult (MIT)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult	Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Child (MIT)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Child
Missouri	\$9.96	\$10.76	93%	\$23.45	42%
Montana	\$9.84	\$10.95	90%	\$24.28	41%
Nebraska	\$10.33	\$10.60	97%	\$23.64	44%
Nevada	\$10.39	\$10.94	95%	\$24.59	42%
New Hampshire	\$10.79	\$12.01	90%	\$25.67	42%
New Jersey	\$11.51	\$13.72	84%	\$28.56	40%
New Mexico	\$9.66	\$10.98	88%	\$24.63	39%
New York	\$12.38	\$14.42	86%	\$29.71	42%
North Carolina	\$9.86	\$11.36	87%	\$23.80	41%
North Dakota	\$10.56	\$10.89	97%	\$23.33	45%
Ohio	\$9.86	\$10.47	94%	\$22.61	44%
Oklahoma	\$9.10	\$10.52	87%	\$22.98	40%
Oregon	\$11.45	\$12.48	92%	\$25.49	45%
Pennsylvania	\$9.71	\$11.11	87%	\$23.55	41%
Rhode Island	\$11.82	\$12.10	98%	\$26.18	45%
South Carolina	\$9.15	\$11.17	82%	\$22.63	40%
South Dakota	\$9.68	\$10.03	97%	\$21.77	44%
Tennessee	\$9.28	\$10.44	89%	\$21.92	42%
Texas	\$9.46	\$11.03	86%	\$23.23	41%
Utah	\$9.55	\$11.22	85%	\$23.63	40%
Vermont	\$12.71	\$12.32	103%	\$25.92	49%
Virginia	\$9.82	\$13.86	71%	\$27.98	35%
Washington	\$12.32	\$12.28	100%	\$26.53	46%
West Virginia	\$9.52	\$10.68	89%	\$22.06	43%
Wisconsin	\$10.03	\$11.03	91%	\$24.57	41%
Wyoming	\$11.14	\$10.63	105%	\$23.63	47%

Source: Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://cscc.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage Calculator can be accessed at <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>



Appendix Table 2	Child Care Worker Wages Compared to the Basic Economic Security Tables Index, by State, 2017						
State	Median Hourly Wage	Living Hourly Wages for 1 Adult (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult (BEST)	Living Hourly Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Infant (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Infant (BEST)	Living Hourly Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Preschooler (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Preschooler (BEST)
<b>NATIONAL</b>	\$10.72	\$16.93	63%	\$25.25	42%	\$26.88	40%
<b>Alabama</b>	\$8.93	\$14.61	61%	\$19.17	47%	\$19.56	46%
<b>Alaska</b>	\$11.99	\$17.26	69%	\$26.64	45%	\$27.90	43%
<b>Arizona</b>	\$11.24	\$15.05	75%	\$22.93	49%	\$24.61	46%
<b>Arkansas</b>	\$9.32	\$12.80	73%	\$16.81	55%	\$17.32	54%
<b>California</b>	\$12.29	\$22.39	55%	\$32.95	37%	\$34.44	36%
<b>Colorado</b>	\$12.60	\$18.06	70%	\$28.13	45%	\$30.59	41%
<b>Connecticut</b>	\$11.87	\$19.37	61%	\$30.59	39%	\$31.52	38%
<b>Delaware</b>	\$10.21	\$18.52	55%	\$27.27	37%	\$28.76	36%
<b>District of Columbia</b>	\$14.33	\$26.46	54%	\$41.22	35%	\$43.53	33%
<b>Florida</b>	\$10.09	\$15.99	63%	\$24.13	42%	\$24.21	42%
<b>Georgia</b>	\$9.53	\$16.82	57%	\$22.87	42%	\$23.93	40%
<b>Hawaii</b>	\$10.64	\$24.84	43%	\$34.71	31%	\$36.47	29%
<b>Idaho</b>	\$9.04	\$13.26	68%	\$19.16	47%	\$19.72	46%
<b>Illinois</b>	\$10.77	\$16.84	64%	\$25.57	42%	\$28.25	38%
<b>Indiana</b>	\$9.62	\$13.29	72%	\$19.64	49%	\$23.54	41%
<b>Iowa</b>	\$9.20	\$12.91	71%	\$19.53	47%	\$21.55	43%
<b>Kansas</b>	\$9.25	\$12.98	71%	\$19.57	47%	\$22.23	42%
<b>Kentucky</b>	\$9.28	\$13.40	69%	\$19.68	47%	\$19.32	48%
<b>Louisiana</b>	\$8.95	\$14.64	61%	\$18.35	49%	\$20.54	44%
<b>Maine</b>	\$11.18	\$15.95	70%	\$24.24	46%	\$24.70	45%
<b>Maryland</b>	\$11.29	\$22.59	50%	\$32.97	34%	\$32.26	35%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	\$12.74	\$21.57	59%	\$33.49	38%	\$36.27	35%
<b>Michigan</b>	\$10.09	\$14.31	71%	\$21.94	46%	\$23.63	43%
<b>Minnesota</b>	\$11.27	\$15.55	72%	\$24.95	45%	\$29.03	39%
<b>Mississippi</b>	\$8.84	\$13.90	64%	\$17.18	51%	\$18.59	48%
<b>Missouri</b>	\$9.96	\$13.41	74%	\$18.71	53%	\$21.10	47%

Appendix Table 2		Child Care Worker Wages Compared to the Basic Economic Security Tables Index, by State, 2017 (continued)					
State	Median Hourly Wage	Living Hourly Wages for 1 Adult (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult (BEST)	Living Hourly Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Infant (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Infant (BEST)	Living Hourly Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Preschooler (BEST)	Median Wage as % of Living Wage for 1 Adult & 1 Preschooler (BEST)
Montana	\$9.84	\$13.81	71%	\$20.81	47%	\$21.67	45%
Nebraska	\$10.33	\$12.93	80%	\$20.03	52%	\$21.26	49%
Nevada	\$10.39	\$13.48	77%	\$22.18	47%	\$22.91	45%
New Hampshire	\$10.79	\$16.42	66%	\$24.98	43%	\$26.53	41%
New Jersey	\$11.51	\$21.36	54%	\$31.35	37%	\$32.80	35%
New Mexico	\$9.66	\$13.38	72%	\$20.99	46%	\$21.22	46%
New York	\$12.38	\$23.55	53%	\$36.55	34%	\$37.90	33%
North Carolina	\$9.86	\$15.05	66%	\$22.08	45%	\$23.20	43%
North Dakota	\$10.56	\$13.42	79%	\$19.46	54%	\$20.52	51%
Ohio	\$9.86	\$12.63	78%	\$19.29	51%	\$20.35	48%
Oklahoma	\$9.10	\$13.49	67%	\$19.86	46%	\$20.09	45%
Oregon	\$11.45	\$18.41	62%	\$26.95	42%	\$28.96	40%
Pennsylvania	\$9.71	\$15.15	64%	\$23.37	42%	\$25.20	39%
Rhode Island	\$11.82	\$16.56	71%	\$26.11	45%	\$27.02	44%
South Carolina	\$9.15	\$15.03	61%	\$19.99	46%	\$22.06	41%
South Dakota	\$9.68	\$11.72	83%	\$16.38	59%	\$17.41	56%
Tennessee	\$9.28	\$13.07	71%	\$18.59	50%	\$20.41	45%
Texas	\$9.46	\$14.50	65%	\$20.95	45%	\$21.82	43%
Utah	\$9.55	\$14.20	67%	\$23.60	40%	\$23.94	40%
Vermont	\$12.71	\$17.16	74%	\$25.82	49%	\$28.62	44%
Virginia	\$9.82	\$20.72	47%	\$29.94	33%	\$30.36	32%
Washington	\$12.32	\$18.53	66%	\$27.95	44%	\$28.52	43%
West Virginia	\$9.52	\$13.25	72%	\$18.82	51%	\$20.18	47%
Wisconsin	\$10.03	\$14.02	72%	\$24.15	42%	\$25.30	40%
Wyoming	\$11.14	\$13.15	85%	\$19.68	57%	\$20.80	54%

Note: BEST standards used in this graph are for workers without benefits. The BEST Index also includes estimates for workers with benefits.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics. Retrieved from <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/>; Wider Opportunities for Women and the Center for Social Development at Washington University-St. Louis. The Basic Economic Security Tables Index. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/best/>.

Appendix Table 3										
Early Educator Wages Compared to the Center for Economic and Policy Research Good Jobs Standard (\$20.75 per hour, adjusted for inflation), 2017										
State	Child Care Workers		Preschool Teachers		Preschool/Child Care Center Directors		Kindergarten Teachers		Elementary School Teachers	
	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage (10 month)	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage (10 month)	Median Wage as % of Good Wage
<b>NATIONAL</b>	\$10.72	52%	\$13.94	67%	\$22.54	109%	\$31.29	151%	\$32.98	159%
Alabama	\$8.93	43%	\$10.98	53%	\$16.36	79%	\$25.04	121%	\$28.61	138%
Alaska	\$11.99	58%	\$14.82	71%	\$28.86	139%	\$40.48	195%	\$42.87	207%
Arizona	\$11.24	54%	\$13.42	65%	\$18.05	87%	\$24.83	120%	\$24.97	120%
Arkansas	\$9.32	45%	\$14.25	69%	\$19.94	96%	\$26.62	128%	\$27.29	132%
California	\$12.29	59%	\$16.19	78%	\$23.91	115%	\$38.33	185%	\$45.17	218%
Colorado	\$12.60	61%	\$13.88	67%	\$22.73	110%	\$27.68	133%	\$28.71	138%
Connecticut	\$11.87	57%	\$16.58	80%	\$24.71	119%	\$43.90	212%	\$44.65	215%
Delaware	\$10.21	49%	\$12.54	60%	\$24.44	118%	\$31.73	153%	\$34.05	164%
District of Columbia	\$14.33	69%	\$18.02	87%	N/A	N/A	\$34.36	166%	\$43.06	207%
Florida	\$10.09	49%	\$11.70	56%	\$22.89	110%	\$27.06	130%	\$27.23	131%
Georgia	\$9.53	46%	\$13.42	65%	\$19.07	92%	\$30.92	149%	\$31.73	153%
Hawaii	\$10.64	51%	\$17.94	86%	\$23.29	112%	\$26.20	126%	\$34.58	167%
Idaho	\$9.04	44%	\$10.75	52%	\$17.96	87%	\$26.58	128%	\$25.81	124%
Illinois	\$10.77	52%	\$13.64	66%	\$24.02	116%	\$30.77	148%	\$33.93	164%
Indiana	\$9.62	46%	\$11.65	56%	\$18.99	92%	\$27.23	131%	\$28.26	136%
Iowa	\$9.20	44%	\$11.12	54%	\$17.05	82%	\$29.93	144%	\$30.73	148%
Kansas	\$9.25	45%	\$12.94	62%	\$19.50	94%	\$26.91	130%	\$27.73	134%
Kentucky	\$9.28	45%	\$15.49	75%	\$20.81	100%	\$31.11	150%	\$30.84	149%
Louisiana	\$8.95	43%	\$17.07	82%	\$19.20	93%	\$28.04	135%	\$27.48	132%
Maine	\$11.18	54%	\$14.92	72%	\$22.59	109%	\$30.20	146%	\$30.54	147%
Maryland	\$11.29	54%	\$14.16	68%	\$22.25	107%	\$35.45	171%	\$37.93	183%
Massachusetts	\$12.74	61%	\$15.71	76%	\$27.11	131%	\$41.24	199%	\$43.07	208%
Michigan	\$10.09	49%	\$13.94	67%	\$21.78	105%	\$32.04	154%	\$35.49	171%
Minnesota	\$11.27	54%	\$14.93	72%	\$24.36	117%	\$32.39	156%	\$35.00	169%
Mississippi	\$8.84	43%	\$13.14	63%	\$16.56	80%	\$24.83	120%	\$25.04	121%
Missouri	\$9.96	48%	\$12.03	58%	\$20.69	100%	\$28.25	136%	\$27.66	133%

Appendix Table 3										
Early Educator Wages Compared to the Center for Economic and Policy Research Good Jobs Standard (\$20.75 per hour, adjusted for inflation), 2017 (continued)										
State	Child Care Workers		Preschool Teachers		Preschool/Child Care Center Directors		Kindergarten Teachers		Elementary School Teachers	
	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage	Median Hourly Wage	Median Wage as % of Good Wage
Montana	\$9.84	47%	\$13.90	67%	\$18.30	88%	\$29.64	143%	\$28.74	138%
Nebraska	\$10.33	50%	\$17.37	84%	\$22.51	108%	\$32.46	156%	\$32.13	155%
Nevada	\$10.39	50%	\$12.01	58%	\$21.47	103%	\$31.36	151%	\$32.07	155%
New Hampshire	\$10.79	52%	\$13.75	66%	\$21.56	104%	\$32.29	156%	\$33.13	160%
New Jersey	\$11.51	55%	\$15.57	75%	\$26.27	127%	\$35.96	173%	\$37.87	183%
New Mexico	\$9.66	47%	\$12.89	62%	\$19.87	96%	\$33.35	161%	\$32.45	156%
New York	\$12.38	60%	\$16.64	80%	\$30.54	147%	\$41.19	199%	\$44.60	215%
North Carolina	\$9.86	48%	\$12.44	60%	\$20.97	101%	\$25.37	122%	\$26.03	125%
North Dakota	\$10.56	51%	\$13.58	65%	\$18.96	91%	\$27.29	132%	\$28.47	137%
Ohio	\$9.86	48%	\$11.80	57%	\$18.60	90%	\$31.52	152%	\$34.36	166%
Oklahoma	\$9.10	44%	\$13.86	67%	\$18.04	87%	\$21.91	106%	\$22.17	107%
Oregon	\$11.45	55%	\$13.70	66%	\$22.12	107%	\$38.80	187%	\$36.98	178%
Pennsylvania	\$9.71	47%	\$12.99	63%	\$20.82	100%	\$31.10	150%	\$35.97	173%
Rhode Island	\$11.82	57%	\$14.57	70%	\$27.21	131%	\$38.45	185%	\$41.02	198%
South Carolina	\$9.15	44%	\$11.08	53%	\$16.46	79%	\$29.67	143%	\$28.43	137%
South Dakota	\$9.68	47%	\$13.84	67%	\$26.70	129%	\$22.84	110%	\$23.53	113%
Tennessee	\$9.28	45%	\$12.30	59%	\$20.54	99%	\$27.23	131%	\$28.33	137%
Texas	\$9.46	46%	\$13.10	63%	\$20.57	99%	\$31.99	154%	\$32.34	156%
Utah	\$9.55	46%	\$12.78	62%	\$18.44	89%	\$23.23	112%	\$30.61	148%
Vermont	\$12.71	61%	\$14.57	70%	\$22.14	107%	\$31.69	153%	\$33.85	163%
Virginia	\$9.82	47%	\$15.59	75%	\$24.90	120%	\$37.18	179%	\$36.98	178%
Washington	\$12.32	59%	\$14.69	71%	\$22.17	107%	\$35.37	170%	\$36.92	178%
West Virginia	\$9.52	46%	\$12.67	61%	\$16.09	78%	\$28.05	135%	\$26.23	126%
Wisconsin	\$10.03	48%	\$11.64	56%	\$19.53	94%	\$31.19	150%	\$32.39	156%
Wyoming	\$11.14	54%	\$14.33	69%	\$23.75	114%	\$32.91	159%	\$33.51	161%

Note: All teacher estimates exclude special education teachers. Hourly wages for preschool teachers (in schools only), kindergarten teachers, and elementary school teachers were calculated by dividing the reported annual salary by 40 hours per week, 10 months per year, in order to take into account standard school schedules. All other occupations assume 40 hours per week, 12 months per year. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics. Retrieved from <http://stats.bls.gov/oes/>; Schmitt, J. & Jones, J. (2012). Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone? Washington DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://cepr.net/documents/publications/good-jobs-2012-07.pdf>.

Appendix Table 4	State Minimum Wages Compared to MIT Living Wage Standard		
State	State Minimum Wage	Living Wage for 1 Adult (MIT)	Gap Between Living Wage and Minimum Wage
NATIONAL	\$7.25	\$11.78	\$4.53
Alabama	\$7.25*	\$11.14	\$3.89
Alaska	\$9.89	\$12.48	\$2.59
Arizona	\$11.00	\$11.22	\$0.22
Arkansas	\$9.25	\$10.38	\$1.13
California	\$12.00	\$14.01	\$2.01
Colorado	\$11.10	\$12.47	\$1.37
Connecticut	\$10.10	\$12.88	\$2.78
Delaware	\$8.75	\$12.44	\$3.69
District of Columbia	\$13.25	\$17.11	\$3.86
Florida	\$8.46	\$11.75	\$3.29
Georgia	\$7.25	\$11.93	\$4.68
Hawaii	\$10.10	\$15.39	\$5.29
Idaho	\$7.25	\$10.64	\$3.39
Illinois	\$8.25	\$12.50	\$4.25
Indiana	\$7.25	\$10.70	\$3.45
Iowa	\$7.25	\$10.53	\$3.28
Kansas	\$7.25	\$10.69	\$3.44
Kentucky	\$7.25	\$10.49	\$3.24
Louisiana	\$7.25*	\$10.91	\$3.66
Maine	\$11.00	\$11.60	\$0.60
Maryland	\$10.10	\$14.62	\$4.52
Massachusetts	\$12.00	\$13.39	\$1.39
Michigan	\$9.25	\$10.87	\$1.62
Minnesota	\$9.86	\$11.53	\$1.67
Mississippi	\$7.25*	\$10.86	\$3.61

Appendix Table 4	State Minimum Wages Compared to MIT Living Wage Standard (continued)		
State	State Minimum Wage	Living Wage for 1 Adult (MIT)	Gap Between Living Wage and Minimum Wage
Missouri	\$8.60	\$10.76	\$2.16
Montana	\$8.50	\$10.95	\$2.45
Nebraska	\$9.00	\$10.60	\$1.60
Nevada	\$8.25	\$10.94	\$2.69
New Hampshire	\$7.25	\$12.01	\$4.76
New Jersey	\$8.85	\$13.72	\$4.87
New Mexico	\$7.50	\$10.98	\$3.48
New York	\$11.10	\$14.42	\$3.32
North Carolina	\$7.25	\$11.36	\$4.11
North Dakota	\$7.25	\$10.89	\$3.64
Ohio	\$8.55	\$10.47	\$1.92
Oklahoma	\$7.25	\$10.52	\$3.27
Oregon	\$10.75	\$12.48	\$1.73
Pennsylvania	\$7.25	\$11.11	\$3.86
Rhode Island	\$10.50	\$12.10	\$1.60
South Carolina	\$7.25*	\$11.17	\$3.92
South Dakota	\$9.10	\$10.03	\$0.93
Tennessee	\$7.25*	\$10.44	\$3.19
Texas	\$7.25	\$11.03	\$3.78
Utah	\$7.25	\$11.22	\$3.97
Vermont	\$10.77	\$12.32	\$1.55
Virginia	\$7.25	\$13.86	\$6.61
Washington	\$12.00	\$12.28	\$0.28
West Virginia	\$8.75	\$10.68	\$1.93
Wisconsin	\$7.25	\$11.03	\$3.78
Wyoming	\$7.25	\$10.63	\$3.38

Note: States with \* next to their minimum wages do not have a state minimum wage, so the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 applies.

Source: The Economic Policy Institute. Minimum Wage Tracker. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/>; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Living Wage Calculator. Retrieved from <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>.

Appendix Table 5	Compensation Strategies vs. Other Income-Related Strategies		
Strategy	Compensation Strategies	Other Income-Related Strategies	
		Financial Relief	Educational Supports
<b>Purpose</b>	Increase on-the-job wages/ salaries and/or benefits	Relieve burden of low compensation by providing supplemental income	Support increased educational attainment (may or may not include attendant wage increases)
<b>Mechanisms</b>	Set salary standards Establish contracts with programs that specify funding for wages and benefits Pass minimum wage legislation	Stipends Tax credits	Scholarships Paid release time Mentoring
<b>Strengths</b>	Offers dependable, ongoing boost in pay for individual early educators Changes overall wage structure of early childhood jobs	A relatively quick way of getting increased income into the hands of currently low-paid teachers	Supports early educators to achieve higher training/qualification goals
<b>Challenges</b>	Adequate public financing is crucial	Does not fundamentally change system of low pay for early educators Existence of wage supplements may make it more difficult to advocate for real compensation reform	Improvements in pay as a result of higher qualifications/promotion may be small and are not guaranteed
<b>Real World Examples</b>	ECE Specific Pre-K teacher salary parity ( <a href="#">Alabama</a> ) Apprenticeships or T.E.A.C.H. scholarships with raises built in ( <a href="#">T.E.A.C.H.: Various states</a> ) All Occupations Raised minimum wage standards ( <a href="#">California</a> )	ECE Specific Stipends ( <a href="#">North Carolina</a> ) ECE-specific tax credits ( <a href="#">Louisiana</a> ) All Occupations State Earned Income Tax Credit ( <a href="#">District of Columbia</a> )	Scholarships without explicit compensation component ( <a href="#">Connecticut</a> )

Appendix Table 6	Early Educator Tax Credits	
State	Louisiana	Nebraska <sup>1</sup>
<b>Name</b>	Louisiana School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC)	School Readiness Tax Credit (LB 889)
<b>Operates State-wide?</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Number of Participants in Most Recent Year</b>	6,303 (2017)	Not available
<b>Annual Award Levels</b>	Range: \$1715-\$3429; Average: \$2239.	Range: \$500-\$1500; Average: Not available.
<b>Eligibility: Range of Registry/Qualification Levels</b>	Award amounts are tied to education levels for teachers and directors. Range for teachers: 80 clock hours of instruction in approved core knowledge (CDA) subject areas to graduate degree in early childhood/child development. Range for directors: CDA credential, approved early childhood diploma, or Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate and 30 clock hours in approved administrative categories to master's degree in Early Childhood, Child Development, or Early Childhood Administration and the administrator certificate.	Award amounts are tied to Nebraska's Early Childhood Professional Record System. Range: Level 1 (CDA or one-year certificate/diploma in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, 12 clock hours of NDE-verified/approved training, and at least 6 months of employment in an eligible program during the tax year) to Level 4 (bachelor's degree or above in ECE or CD, 30 clock hours of NDE-verified/approved training, and at least 3 years of experience working with children in an ECE environment).
<b>Eligibility: Employment</b>	Must work for at least 6 months in child care (publicly funded centers only) for an average of 30 hours/week.	Must have at least 6 months of employment in an eligible program (receives child care subsidies, has quality rating) during the tax year.
<b>Eligibility: Other</b>	Child care center must be Type III (registered to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program). Child care centers that have Type I or Type II licenses (which do not receive public funds beyond food and nutrition) may not participate. Family homes may also not participate.	Must have a classification in the registry and have a CDA.
<b>Funding Source(s)</b>	State (100%) from the state of Louisiana with the CCDF state match.	State (100%) from the State General Fund.

<sup>1</sup>Nebraska School Readiness Tax Credits will sunset in 2021.

Source: Survey of states for the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index, see Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>.



Appendix Table 7		Early Educator Stipends <sup>1</sup>				
State	Name	Operates State-Wide?	Frequency of Awards	Annual Award Levels		Number of Participants in Most Recent Year
				Range	Average	
Arizona	REWARD\$	No	Every year	\$500-\$2000	\$1064	317 (FY2017)
Delaware	Child Care WAGES Delaware	Yes	Every 6 months	\$200-\$5000	\$1598	187 (FY2017)
District of Columbia	Quality Improvement Network	Yes	Every 3 months	\$2000-\$2000	\$2000	125 (FY2018)
Florida	Child Care WAGES Florida	No	Every 6 months	\$200-\$3000	\$1188	910 (FY2017)
Georgia	DECAL Scholars	Yes	Every 6 months	\$250-\$1250	Not available	Not available
Illinois	Great START	Yes	Every 6 months	\$300-\$3900	\$1548	3677 (FY2017)
Iowa	Child Care WAGES Iowa	No	Every 6 months	\$500-\$3500	\$1670	42 (FY2017)
Kansas <sup>2</sup>	Child Care WAGES Kansas	Yes	Every 6 months	\$600-\$2000	Not available	Not available
Maryland	Maryland Child Care Credential Program	Yes	Every year	\$200-\$1500	Not available	Not available
Minnesota	R.E.E.T.A.I.N.	Yes	Every year	\$500-\$3500	Not available	144 (FY2014)
New Mexico <sup>3</sup>	INCENTIVES\$	Yes	Every 6 months	\$600-\$5000	\$1835	224 (FY2017)
North Carolina <sup>4</sup>	WAGES\$	Yes	Every 6 months	\$798-\$3538	\$2000	3299 (FY2017)
Pennsylvania	Keystone STARS Education & Retention Award	Yes	Every year	\$290-\$3090	Not available	Not available
Utah	Professional Development Incentive	Yes	Every year	\$245-\$1805	\$1070	1104 (FY2017)
Wisconsin	REWARD	Yes	Every 6 months	\$100-\$900	\$545	1202 (FY2017)

<sup>1</sup>Many states also offer small cash bonuses as a one-off recognition of educational achievement, but we classify these separately from stipends and tax credits. See Whitebook et al. (2018) Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018 for more information.

<sup>2</sup>Kansas's Child Care WAGES program ended in 2018.

<sup>3</sup>New Mexico's INCENTIVES\$ program, a WAGES\$ affiliate, ended on June 30, 2018.

<sup>4</sup>North Carolina recently implemented an additional stipend program specifically for infant-toddler teachers (NC AWARDS\$), see: <https://www.childcareservices.org/awards/>.

Source: Survey of states for the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index, see Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>.

<b>Appendix Table 7</b>	<b>Early Educator Stipends (continued)</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>Award Amounts: Range of Registry/Qualification Levels</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	Award amounts tied to career lattice levels. Range: Level B (high school diploma plus 6 credit hours in ECE or related field) to Level G (master's degree in ECE or master's including either 30 undergraduate credit hours or 18 graduate credit hours in ECE or a related field).
<b>Delaware</b>	Award amounts tied to education levels. Range: 6 semester credits in ECE to master's degree with at least 24 credits in ECE.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Florida</b>	Award amounts tied to credentials and education levels. Range: 6 credit hours in ECE or Child Development (CD) and a Florida Staff Credential to master's degree plus or including at least 18 credit hours in ECE or CD.
<b>Georgia</b>	Award amounts tied to credentials and education levels. Range: Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or Intro to Child Care Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) to master's degree.
<b>Illinois</b>	Award amounts tied to credentials and education levels. Range: 6 semester hours in ECE or Child Development (CD) to master's degree in ECE or CD or Illinois Director Credential III.
<b>Iowa</b>	Award amounts tied to education levels. Range: 12 ECE college credits to master's or doctoral degree plus or including 24 ECE credits.
<b>Kansas</b>	Not available.
<b>Maryland</b>	Award amounts tied to education/training, experience, and professional activity. Range: 45 clock hours of education, minimum of 20 hours in Child Development (CD), and 1 professional activity unit to 135 clock hours, enrollment in an approved college course of study toward a degree, 11 ECE credit course credits or 11 years of experience, and 2 years working directly with children in a licensed child care program.
<b>Minnesota</b>	Award amounts tied to career lattice steps. Range: Step 5 (Minnesota Child Care Credential) to Steps 11 and 12 (master's degree or doctoral degree with 6 to 23 approved credits).
<b>New Mexico</b>	Award amounts tied to education levels. Range: 5 semester hours in ECE to bachelor's degree.
<b>North Carolina</b>	Award amounts tied to education levels. Range: 18 hours of general education including at least 4 birth-to-five-focused hours or Early Childhood Certificate or Child Development Associate (CDA) credential earned for at least 12 semester hours or 12 birth-to-five-focused semester hours to doctoral degree plus or including at least 18 birth-to-five-focused hours.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Award amounts tied to STAR level, hours worked, and career lattice level. Range: STAR Level 2, 15 to 19 hours worked per week, and Career Lattice Level 3 (credential, diploma, certificate or 6 ECE credits) to STAR level 4, 35 to 40 hours worked per week, and Career Lattice Level 6 (bachelor's degree in ECE-related field, including 30 ECE credits, elementary education and 18 ECE credits, or any field with ECE certification) or above.
<b>Utah</b>	Award amounts tied to career ladder levels. Range: Health, Safety, Basic Child Development training to doctoral degree (related field).
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Award amounts tied to registry levels. Range: Level 7 (Mentor and Mentor Protégé courses and 6 related credits) to Level 17 (early childhood and youth development-related doctorate or doctorate in another field plus 36 related credits or 2 registry credentials).

<b>Appendix Table 7</b>	<b>Early Educator Stipends (continued)</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility: Employment</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	Must be employed at an eligible program as a director, teacher, or family child care provider; currently work at least 30 hours/week (teachers and providers must work directly with children age 0 to 5); and must have worked at least 1 year of continuous employment at current program.
<b>Delaware</b>	Must work at a licensed child care program rated level 3 or higher in QRIS and must have worked at least 6 months in the same child care program.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	Must be an early Head Start Partnership teacher.
<b>Florida</b>	Must work a minimum of 6 months in a participating licensed or license-exempt child care program in a participating county; must work a minimum of 10 hours per week with children age 0 to 5 in a child care center or home. Individual county requirements may differ.
<b>Georgia</b>	Must work in an eligible program for at least 25 hours per week; must be employed with current employer or be a registered provider for at least 12 consecutive months in an eligible position; and must work at a program that is Quality Rated, NAEYC certified, participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and serves at least 25% children receiving CAPS subsidy or at a public pre-K/school.
<b>Illinois</b>	Must work as a director, teacher, provider, or assistant in a licensed program that has been open at least a year and operates full-day/full-year; must have been employed at the same program for at least 1 continuous year; and must work on average at least 15 hours per week.
<b>Iowa</b>	Must work in an eligible early care and education program in a funded county and must work at least 6 months in the same child care program.
<b>Kansas</b>	Must work a minimum of 10 hours per week with children age 0 to 5 in a licensed program and must work in an eligible or participating county.
<b>Maryland</b>	Must work as a registered family child care provider or an operator, director, or staff member in a licensed child care center.
<b>Minnesota</b>	Must be a licensed child care provider or work for a licensed program; must work directly with children at least 30 hours per week; and must be in current position for at least one year.
<b>New Mexico</b>	Must work 10 hours per week with children under age 5; must work in licensed center or licensed/registered home which serves at least 1 subsidized child. Individuals working at Head Start/Early Head Start (except Santa Fe County) and public pre-K are not eligible.
<b>North Carolina</b>	Must work in a participating county, at least 10 hours per week with children age 0 to 5 in a licensed child care program, and for at least 6 months in the same program.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Must work in a Keystone STARS child care or school-age program, employed at the site or same legal entity for at least 12 consecutive months; in addition, teaching staff must work directly with children during operating hours at least 15 hours a week.
<b>Utah</b>	Must be employed as a licensed family child care provider who cares for at least 1 unrelated child or work at a licensed child care center as a teacher, caregiver, or director/owner; employed for 20 hours per week with 1 or more unrelated children age 0 to 12 in an eligible program that is open full day/week/year; and must be currently and continuously employed for at least 12 months at an eligible program.
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Must be employed by a certified or licensed program; work at least 20 hours per week, 5% of the time in an early childhood classroom, either directly with children or in supervision and support of staff; must have worked at present employer for 3 current and continuous years or have 6 years of experience in regulated child care programs as documented by the Registry.

Appendix Table 7	Early Educator Stipends (continued)	
State	Eligibility: Maximum Wage/Salary	Eligibility: Credentials/Other
Arizona	\$20.00/hour or less	Must be at least 18 years of age and lawfully present in the United States and have completed a minimum of 6 credit hours of college coursework in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, or Child Development with a grade of C or better.
Delaware	\$15.00/hour or less	Must be qualified through Delaware First and have 6 semester credits in ECE.
District of Columbia	None	None
Florida	\$17.50/hour or less	Must have a formal child care credential and/or some education beyond a high school diploma.
Georgia	\$16.50/hour or less OR \$34,320/year or less	None
Illinois	\$15.00/hour or less OR \$31,200.00/year or less	Must have at least 6 semester hours in ECE or CD and be a U.S. citizen or legal resident.
Iowa	\$15.00/hour or less is the standard, but varies by county	Must have at least 12 early childhood college credits.
Kansas	\$14.45/hour or less	Must have some formal child care credential or education beyond high school.
Maryland	None	Must complete the required amount of continued training to maintain credential level and participate in the required number of professional activities related to the child care profession and maintain credential level.
Minnesota	None	Must have a Minnesota Child Care Credential (MNCCC) or a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher, have a current Develop membership, and NOT be a current T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship recipient.
New Mexico	\$16.00/hour or less	Must have at least 5 credit hours of ECE or 70 credit hours of college coursework.
North Carolina	Varies by funding partnership (\$14, \$16, or \$18/hour or less)	Must have 18 hours of general education including at least 4 birth-to-five-focused hours, Early Childhood Certificate, CDA credential earned for at least 12 semester hours, or 12 birth-to-five-focused semester hours.
Pennsylvania	\$40,000/year or less for practitioners and \$50,000/year or less for directors, including salary and bonuses	Directors must be at Career Lattice Level V or above; FCCH owner/operator must be at Career Lattice Level 3 (Level 4 receives the teaching staff award); and teaching staff must be at Career Lattice Level 3 or above.
Utah	None	None
Wisconsin	\$16.50/hour or less	Must be at Registry Level 7 or above.

<b>Appendix Table 7</b>	<b>Early Educator Stipends (continued)</b>	
<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility: Ongoing or Post-Award Requirements</b>	<b>Restrictions on Receiving Multiple Awards</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	None	None
<b>Delaware</b>	Remain at the same child care program during the processing time.	For certain education levels, a recipient must move up a step within 2 years to retain eligibility.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	None	None (recipients can receive stipends for the life of the grant).
<b>Florida</b>	Be employed at this same program at the time of employment confirmation.	None
<b>Georgia</b>	Earn an ECE credential/degree within 5 years of applying for an award.	Entry-level recipients can receive an award up to 2 times. Higher levels can receive an award up to 4 times.
<b>Illinois</b>	None	None
<b>Iowa</b>	Be employed at the same child care program when funding is available and a final confirmation has been completed.	None
<b>Kansas</b>	Not available	Not available
<b>Maryland</b>	Continue working in a child care setting for 1 additional year.	Certain core knowledge education levels may only receive 1 award and must move up a level to receive additional awards.
<b>Minnesota</b>	Remain in their current position for 1 year after receiving an award.	An individual can only receive an award every other year.
<b>New Mexico</b>	Checks are issued to participants after each 6-month period of work in the same early childhood program. If a participant moves to another qualifying program within the 6 months, then the commitment period must be reset based on employment date at the new site.	For certain educational levels, individuals must move up a level within 2 or 3 years in order to retain eligibility.
<b>North Carolina</b>	Be employed at the same child care program when funding is available and a final confirmation has been completed.	At certain qualification levels but not others, participants must move up a level before receiving another stipend.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	None	None
<b>Utah</b>	Must complete 10 hours of Career Ladder-approved annual training, college credit, continuing education units, or professional activities. The same class can only be used once every 3 years.	None
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Participants at Registry Level 7, 8, 9, and 10 must complete 3 ECE credits over the course of two 6-month agreements to continue participating in REWARD.	Recipients at Registry Level 7, 8, 9, or 10 are not automatically eligible for another stipend; they need to successfully complete 3 credits of Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework before another stipend will be awarded.

<b>Appendix Table 7</b>	<b>Early Educator Stipends (continued)</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	State (100%) from the tobacco tax.
<b>Delaware</b>	Federal (100%) from CCDF/CCDBG.
<b>District of Columbia</b>	District (40%); federal (37%); private (23%).
<b>Florida</b>	Local contributors, such as early learning coalitions and children services councils.
<b>Georgia</b>	Federal (100%) from the Early Learning Challenge Grant.
<b>Illinois</b>	Not available
<b>Iowa</b>	State (Iowa Department of Management – Early Childhood Iowa Office and Iowa Department of Human Services); other (local, private).
<b>Kansas</b>	Not available
<b>Maryland</b>	Not available
<b>Minnesota</b>	Federal (100%) from CCDF.
<b>New Mexico</b>	State (92%) from the NM Children, Youth & Families Department; private (8%)
<b>North Carolina</b>	State (84.5%) from Smart Start and NC Pre-K; federal (15.5%) from CCDF.
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Not available
<b>Utah</b>	Federal (100%) from CCDF.
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Federal (100%) from CCDF.

# Endnotes

## 1 Introduction

- 1 Quote from CSCCE survey of teachers. For more information about the study, see Whitebook, M., Schlieber, M., Hankey, A., Austin, L.J.E., & Philipp, G. (2018). *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – New York*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.
- 2 Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>.
- 3 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*; \$10.72 refers to those classified as “child care workers,” and \$13.94 for those classified as “preschool teachers,” according to the Standard Occupational Classification used by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
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- 8 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) (2018). *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/24984>.
- 9 In 2012, more than one-third (35 percent) of all center-based teaching staff had a bachelor's degree or higher, see Whitebook, M., McLean, C., & Austin, L.J.E. (2016). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2016*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. According to an unpublished CSCCE analysis of the same dataset, more than three-quarters of the center-based teaching workforce (77 percent) have spent more than five years caring for children under the age of 13, and nearly one-fifth (18 percent) have more than 20 years of such experience.

## 2 Why We Need Compensation Reform: Low Compensation for Early Educators Is Unjust, and It Affects Us All

- 10 It is not possible to disaggregate the occupational category “preschool and kindergarten teachers” using data from the Current Population Survey.
- 11 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
- 12 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
- 13 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
- 14 Quote from CSCCE survey of teachers. For more information about the study, see Whitebook, et al. (2018). *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – New York*.
- 15 Quote from CSCCE survey of teachers. For more information about the study, see Whitebook, M., Hankey, A., Schlieber, M., Austin, L.J.E., & Philipp, G. (2018) *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – Miami-Dade County*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.
- 16 The SEQUAL is a multi-purpose tool developed by CSCCE for examining and improving environments in which early childhood teaching staff work and learn. For more information see <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/sequal/>.
- 17 See Figure 3.10 in Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
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- 21 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
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- 25 England, P., Budig, M., & Folbre, N. (2002). Wages of virtue: The relative pay of care work. *Social Problems* 49(4), 455-473; Figart, D.M & Warnecke, T.L. (eds.) *Handbook of Research on Gender and Economic Life*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2002.49.4.455>.
- 26 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
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- 28 Whitebook et al. (2018) *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*.
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### 3 What Compensation Reform Should Aim For: Livable Wages and Middle-Class Jobs for Early Educators

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- 38 Glasmeier, A. (2019).
- 39 Wider Opportunities for Women and the Center for Social Development at Washington University-St. Louis. *The Basic Economic Security Tables Index*. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/best/>.
- 40 There is no single definition of the middle class. We are using the term to mean jobs which meet the standard of a "good" wage as defined by the Center for Economic and Policy Research.
- 41 Although there is no single, universal definition of a good job, there are several commonalities that can be grouped into four major components: compensation (earnings and benefits); job security and opportunities for advancement; ability to exercise control over work activities and to find meaning in work; work time and control over scheduling for balancing work with family and other non-work activities, see Kalleberg, A. "Good Jobs, Bad Jobs." in Edgell, S., Gottfried, H., & Granter, E. (eds.). (2017). *SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. This brief focuses primarily on the first component, but other aspects of good jobs also merit attention in order to improve recruitment and retention in the early care and education field. For more information about early educator work environments, including teacher perceptions of their job security, control over teaching activities, and scheduling practices, in addition to economic well-being, see CSCCE SEQUAL reports in several states: Whitebook et al. (2016) *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality*; Whitebook et al. (2018); *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – Miami-Dade County*; Whitebook et al. (2018) *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – Minnesota*; Whitebook et al. (2018) *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality – New York*.



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Center for the Study of Child Care Employment  
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment  
University of California, Berkeley