

For immediate release

For Preschool Teachers, More Education Doesn't Always Mean Better Earnings

New research highlights uneven policies across states and offers a framework to address compensation parity for pre-K teachers

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Berkeley – Teachers working with 3-5 year olds in pre-kindergarten programs across the U.S. are often required to have the same training and education as elementary school teachers while receiving significantly lower pay and benefits.

Two new [publications](#) released today by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at UC Berkeley and the [National Institute for Early Education Research](#) at Rutgers University are the first in a series of resources to address the critical policy goal of nation-wide compensation parity for pre-K teachers to ensure a stable, high-quality, and supported workforce.

Policies focused on the early education workforce are essential to delivering the promised economic and social returns of investing in early childhood education programs.

In the brief, "[In Pursuit of Pre-K Parity.](#)" CSCCE Director Marcy Whitebook and researcher Caitlin McLean provide a framework for understanding and advancing compensation parity as opposed to other forms of compensation improvement.

The brief includes data from the report, also released today, "[Teacher Compensation Parity Policies and State Funded Pre-K Programs.](#)" which compares pre-K teacher compensation policies, focusing on public pre-K programs serving about 1.8 million children.

According to the National Academies of Science, Dr. Whitebook says, "the work of teaching and caring for infants, toddlers and preschoolers is as complex as that of older children. Yet, as our brief highlights, a pre-K teacher working in a public school with a bachelor's degree or higher can expect to earn about \$10,000 to \$13,000 less per year than her colleagues teaching older children."

Key findings include:

- Compensation parity is defined as parity with K-3 teachers for salary and benefits for equivalent levels of education and experience, prorated to reflect differences in hours of work in private settings where applicable, and including payment for non-child contact hours (such as paid time for planning).
- Ten states have full compensation parity policies that include salary, benefits, and payment for professional responsibilities, at least for lead pre-K teachers in public schools
- Only Tennessee has full compensation parity policies that apply to all pre-K lead and assistant teachers
- Eighteen states have policies in place with the goal of meeting salary parity, with equivalent starting salary and salary schedule, prorated.

“There is an alarming disparity in how states are addressing compensation parity for pre-K teachers. Some address salaries and not benefits, or apply to certain pre-K teachers – while the majority of states do not have any explicit policies intended to move toward parity for pre-K educators,” says co-author Dr. Caitlin McLean.

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment conducts research and policy analysis focused on achieving comprehensive public investments which enable and reward the early childhood workforce to deliver high quality care and education for all children. For more about CSCCE, visit <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/>

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