



Center for the Study of
Child Care Employment

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EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH

2020 REPORT

50-State Early Educator Policy and Practice Research



**EARLY EDUCATOR
INVESTMENT COLLABORATIVE**

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Early Educator Investment Collaborative

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Background

The Early Educator Investment Collaborative (EEIC) envisions a world in which “every infant, toddler, and young child has access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) programs led by early educators who are well prepared, well trained, and appropriately compensated.”¹ The research partners involved in this effort — the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), and Bellwether Education Partners — share this vision.

Yet currently the U.S. ECE system remains far from these goals: our system of preparing, supporting, and rewarding early educators in the United States remains largely ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable.² There have been notable, but uneven, strides in improving the education and training levels of the ECE workforce, but efforts to link these improvements to policies and resources that address teachers’ economic well-being have been largely optional, selective, and temporary. The current ECE system reflects and reinforces gender, class, racial, and cultural inequities that exist across U.S. institutions, while the ECE system itself is rife with inequity by race/ethnicity, age of children taught, setting type, and funding stream.

Because of the complexity of the existing ECE system, achieving the EEIC’s ambitious goals for the workforce will require moving multiple connected levers at the same time: preparation, including both qualification requirements and higher education infrastructure; adequate working conditions and supports for teachers to implement the skills and knowledge gained through initial preparation and to facilitate improvement over time, and appropriate compensation, to ensure that current teachers are rewarded for their work and future teachers are recruited to the field. Each of these crucial areas depends on securing adequate public financing, but also building political will and overcoming potentially competing interests among various stakeholder groups in a state. The role of unions and other mechanisms for channeling the voices of teachers themselves is particularly crucial to understand.

The provision of free schooling for all children in grades K-12 throughout the nation has long been recognized as a public good that generates many economic and social benefits. To achieve these benefits, a wide consensus has developed across states and types of school settings (public, charter, private) that these teachers should obtain at least a bachelor’s degree plus a grade- or subject-specific certification. Yet, in the case of those working with children from infancy through preschool, a gap exists between the research evidence on the central role that these early educators play in facilitating learning and development and the codified expectations of early educators’

¹ Early Childhood Workforce Investment Initiative. Request For Proposals: Policy And Practice Research Partner(s). October, 2018.

² Much of this discussion is adapted from two sources: Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018a). Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley; McLean, C., Whitebook, M., Roh, E. (2019). From Unlivable Wages to Just Pay for Early Educators. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

knowledge and abilities, particularly with regard to those serving a highly diverse population of young children.³ While some systems treat preschool teachers as part of the K-12 teaching workforce, the persistently low qualifications that have been set for most educators working with children birth to age five perpetuates the false notion that teaching in early education is low-skilled work.

There is some evidence that states are attempting to address more uniform and increased qualifications in state workforce plans or recommendations as well as in statutes.⁴ However, recent proposals to increase qualifications with new regulatory requirements — as in the case of Washington, D.C. (an associate degree for lead teaching staff and a bachelor's degree for administrators in licensed child care programs as well as a Child Development Associate credential for home-based providers) and Oregon (a bachelor's degree for public preschool teachers) — have been met with resistance from early educators, program providers, and parents.^{5,6}

Resistance is understandable and unsurprising in the absence of well-articulated phase-in plans that acknowledge experience and provide continued employment opportunities for the current workforce, improve compensation, and provide financial and structural supports for the incumbent and incoming workforce to access and successfully engage in education and training, and relieve the cost burden for services for parents. **As efforts to advance a skilled and stable workforce are undertaken, it is imperative to recognize that policies related to qualifications do not exist in isolation of other policies and circumstances in the field. The solution, however, is not to maintain the status quo, but rather to provide resources and structures that facilitate success for the workforce and, ultimately, the children for whom they are responsible.**

Poor compensation and broader working conditions have persistently and pervasively undermined quality in early care and education, and have made it difficult to significantly raise qualification requirements and to ensure responsive and effective higher education infrastructure. 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

³Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>.

⁴ In the survey of state ECE representatives for the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index, 25 states responded that since 2016, there had been some movement in their state to increase qualifications, training, or professional development (although the movement was not necessarily successful), and 17 states responded that there had been some effort to unify qualification requirements although again, not always successful.

⁵ Washington, D.C. licensing requirements were revised to allow for a further one-year extension on the original phase-in period, such that these minimum qualifications must be acquired by either 2019 or 2023, depending on the role/setting, see Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) (2017). OSSE Announces Plan to Give Early Childhood Educators More Time to Meet New Education Requirements. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/release/osse-announces-plan-giveearly-childhood-educators-more-time-meet-new-education-requirements>.

⁶ The requirement for lead pre-K teachers in Oregon to have a bachelor's degree in order to lead a classroom was later removed, see Enrolled House Bill 2013. 79th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2017 Regular Session. Retrieved from <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2013/Enrolled>.

turnover rates.⁷ 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.⁸

Churn within the ECE field also 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ Research has also confirmed the link between higher economic well-being for early educators and higher quality interactions between teacher and child.¹¹

Accordingly, reasonable wages and benefits are a necessary condition for transforming early childhood jobs into good, middle-class jobs for the 21st century. While many agree that better

⁷ Whitebook, Marcy, and Laura Sakai. 2004. *By a Thread: How Child Care Centers Hold On to Teachers, How Teachers Build Lasting Careers*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. <https://doi.org/10.17848/9781417524457>.

⁸ McKelvey, L., Forsman, A., & Morrison-Ward, J. (2018). *Arkansas Workforce Study: Instructional Staff in Child Care & Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved from: https://familymedicine.uams.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2018/04/StaffWorkforce-Study-Report_FINAL.pdf; Main, C., Yarbrough, K.W. & Patten, B. (2018). *Voices from the Front Lines of Early Learning: 2017 Illinois Early Childhood Workforce Survey Report*. Chicago, IL: UIC College of Education. Retrieved from: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/2017%20Illinois%20Early%20Childhood%20Workforce%20Survey%20Report.pdf>; Child Care Services Association. (2015). *Working in Early Care and Education in North Carolina*. Retrieved from <http://blue.childcareservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2015-Workforce-Report-FNL.pdf>; Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (2017). *The Commonwealth's Brain Builders: Virginia Early Childhood Workforce Survey 2017*. Retrieved from <http://www.vecf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VECFChildrensWorkforceSurvey-12.19.pdf>.

⁹ Whitebook et al. (2019).

¹⁰ Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Gerber, E., & Howes, C. (2001). *Then & Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000 – Technical Report*. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Child Care Workforce; Whitebook, M., Phillips, D., & Howes, C. (1998). *Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997*. Washington, D.C.: The Center for the Child Care Workforce.

¹¹ 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. 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. See: 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. King, E.K., Johnson, A.V., Cassidy, D.J., Wang, Y.C., Lower, J.K., & Kintner-Duffy, V.L. (2015). *Preschool teachers' financial well-being and work time supports: Associations with children's emotional expressions and behaviors in classrooms*. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 44, 545-553.

compensation for early educators is important, 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. 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 — is not stable enough for providers to confidently invest in ongoing increases to wages or better benefits.¹²

Increased levels of public funding and, crucially, reform of existing funding mechanisms is essential for large-scale and long-term improvements to early educator jobs. Addressing the deficiencies of the current system requires a new financing structure for ECE, such as that proposed in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*.¹³ Efforts to grow the amount and sustainability of public funds must also go hand-in-hand with reducing the fragmentation of the ECE system. 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. Fragmentation of the ECE system into sectors with different qualifications, funding, and other organizational features also diminishes the collective voice of early educators.

Recent K-12 teacher movements demonstrate that change comes at least in part 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

¹² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) (2018). *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/24984>.

¹³ NASEM, 2018.

¹⁴ Pierre, J. & Yarmosky, J. (2019). Denver and Los Angeles: Two cities trying to negotiate a new deal with teachers. NPR. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/01/19/686846662/denver-and-los-angeles-two-cities-trying-to-negotiating-a-new-dealwith-teachers>.

¹⁵ Patel, N. (2016). Stabilizing New York City's child care services. New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://earlychildhoodnyc.org/newswatch/stabilizing-new-york-citys-child-care-services-by-nileshpatel-director-dccny-labor-relations-and-mediation-service/>.

Where there is a union and an infusion of public funds, we see that represented teachers can assert some leverage on the system, but such conditions are few and far between 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, 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 in the classroom. 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. Considering the role that unions and collective bargaining can or should play in advancing long-term goals around professionalism and elevating the profession is key.

Guiding Principles & Research Questions

The goals of this research were to undertake a 50-state scan of policies, practices, political momentum, administrative structures and capacity, higher education context, and financing conditions, and other factors relevant for spurring progress on supports for the early educator workforce.

In addition to the goals and vision as originally outlined by the EEIC Steering Committee,¹⁶ this work has been guided by five principles developed by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment:

1. **Amplify educators' voices, inform decision-making:** The vast majority of early educators are not currently represented by a professional organization or union on the job, and their voices are missing at tables where decisions are made about policies that directly impact their practice and well-being. 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.
2. **Provide opportunity, ensure access:** Barriers reside within systems, not with the individuals who encounter them. When barriers to education are removed and resources provided, the current workforce has demonstrated success in meeting higher qualifications. As states raise expectations for educators, it is necessary to ensure that dedicated and sufficient resources are made available in order for all educators to have the opportunity to advance their skills, knowledge, and education.
3. **Maintain diversity, disrupt stratification:** Although the early educator workforce is racially and linguistically diverse, that diversity is not distributed equitably across positions within the field. Women of color occupy a disproportionate share of the lowest paying jobs in the field and are underrepresented in leadership roles. As states advance workforce reforms,

¹⁶ Early Childhood Workforce Investment Initiative (October 2018). *Request For Proposals: Policy And Practice Research Partner(s)*.

development of intentional strategies and mechanisms to ameliorate racial and ethnic stratification will be critical to ensuring that diversity translates to equity going forward.

4. **Increase consistency, reduce fragmentation:** Greater consistency in program standards and funding is a cornerstone of a more equitable system, but current policies and proposed reforms often address only certain sectors of ECE. 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.
5. **Assure sustainability, dedicate sufficient funding:** Addressing the deficiencies of the current system requires a new financing structure for ECE. 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. Such an effort must move in parallel with efforts to elevate the workforce for the latter to succeed. Recent developments indicate increased public will for spending on child care and early education.

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), and Bellwether Education Partners together performed a scan of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., guided by the following research questions:

- What policies, practices, political momentum, administrative structures and capacity, higher education context, and financing conditions are crucial to a state’s “readiness” to strengthen its ECE workforce components?
- What other factors should be considered, such as considerations of equity related to state child and workforce demographics, existing policies, and other contextual features?
- What do (and don’t) we know about the current conditions across states on these indicators? What are trends and key dimensions of variation across states?

Research Methodology

Our approach to the scan was grounded in our understanding, based on decades of research, that there is no single ingredient to effective ECE workforce development and support. CSCCE’s *Early Childhood Workforce Index* includes five essential policy areas (qualifications and educational supports, work environment standards, compensation and financial relief strategies, workforce data, and financial resources), all of which are necessary to recruit and retain a well-qualified, -supported, and -compensated ECE workforce.

An initial list of indicators to assess across all 50 states was identified, discussed, and revised at the start of the project (see Appendix A). These indicators were used to describe the policies, practices, political momentum, administrative structures and capacity, higher education context, and financing conditions pertaining to the preparation, support, and compensation of early educators, as well as early care and education more broadly where relevant.

Simultaneously to this state scan, we identified the structures, systems, and institutions that deliver and regulate preparation of ECE educators nationally and in each state as well as the key federal, state, and institutional policies and financing related to postsecondary access, preparation, and licensure of ECE educators, in order to provide a detailed analysis of the current state of ECE educator preparation. A subset of state policy, financing, and higher education context indicators that reflect a state's capacity to re-envision and transform ECE educator preparation from this concurrent analysis have been incorporated into the 50-state findings and state selection process. For full findings and analysis of our work on ECE educator preparation, see *Early Educator Preparation Landscape*.

Early Childhood Educator Policies, Practices, and Conditions in the 50 States and Washington, D.C.: Key Findings

Overview

This section briefly summarizes key patterns and trends across states as well as interesting clusters or outlier states, where appropriate, in areas identified as priorities by the EEIC Steering Committee:

- Early Educator Qualifications and Higher Education Infrastructure;
- Early Educator Work Environments;
- Early Educator Compensation; and,
- Political Momentum (Overall and Workforce-Specific).

Overall, no states stand out as doing especially well across *all* areas of consideration.

Typically, there is a great deal of variation among states within a given area, and states often have moved ahead in one area (e.g., qualifications) without corresponding effort in other areas (e.g., compensation), despite what we know about how preparation, on-the-job support, and compensation mutually influence one another to support good practice. Detailed information across the 50 states is provided in selected tables within the report. Further details from an unpublished proprietary database may be available upon request.

Key Findings: Early Educator Qualifications and Higher Education Infrastructure¹⁷

A wide consensus has developed across states and types of school settings (public, charter, private) that K-12 teachers should obtain at least a bachelor's degree plus a grade- or subject-specific certification. Yet, in the case of those working with children from infancy through preschool, a gap exists between the research evidence on the central role that these early educators play in facilitating learning and development and the codified expectations of early educators' knowledge and abilities, particularly with regard to those serving a highly diverse population of young children. While some systems treat preschool teachers as part of the K-12 teaching workforce, the persistently low qualifications that have been set for most educators working with children birth to age five perpetuates the false notion that teaching in early education is low-skilled work.

Though nearly all states have established a set of core knowledge and competencies identifying what early educators — from novice to expert — should know and be able to do, the development of these competencies has by and large not translated into minimum education requirements applied to early educators working with children prior to kindergarten, regardless of setting or age of child. The majority of states have created teaching licenses that encompass at least some of the birth to five age group, but it is still rare for early educators to be individually certified like their K-12 counterparts, except in public pre-K programs where certification is more likely to be required.

- 45 state pre-k programs (in 36 states) require at least some lead pre-k teachers to hold state certification or licensure.¹⁸
- Some states, like California and Louisiana, require at least some early childhood educators to hold credentials that are part of the state's teacher licensure and certification system, but these require less education than a bachelor's degree and traditional teacher certification programs.

For ECE outside of public pre-K, the 50 states and Washington, D.C. each set their own qualification standards for early educators from entry through administrator-level through program-level child care licensing, and those requirements vary widely not only across states, but within states according to setting and source of funding. States typically require one set of qualifications for teaching staff and site administrators in center-based child care, another for those in regulated home-based programs, and yet another for public pre-K. Other qualifications set by the federal government for military child care, Early Head Start, and Head Start programs add further complexity to the array of requirements in a given community.

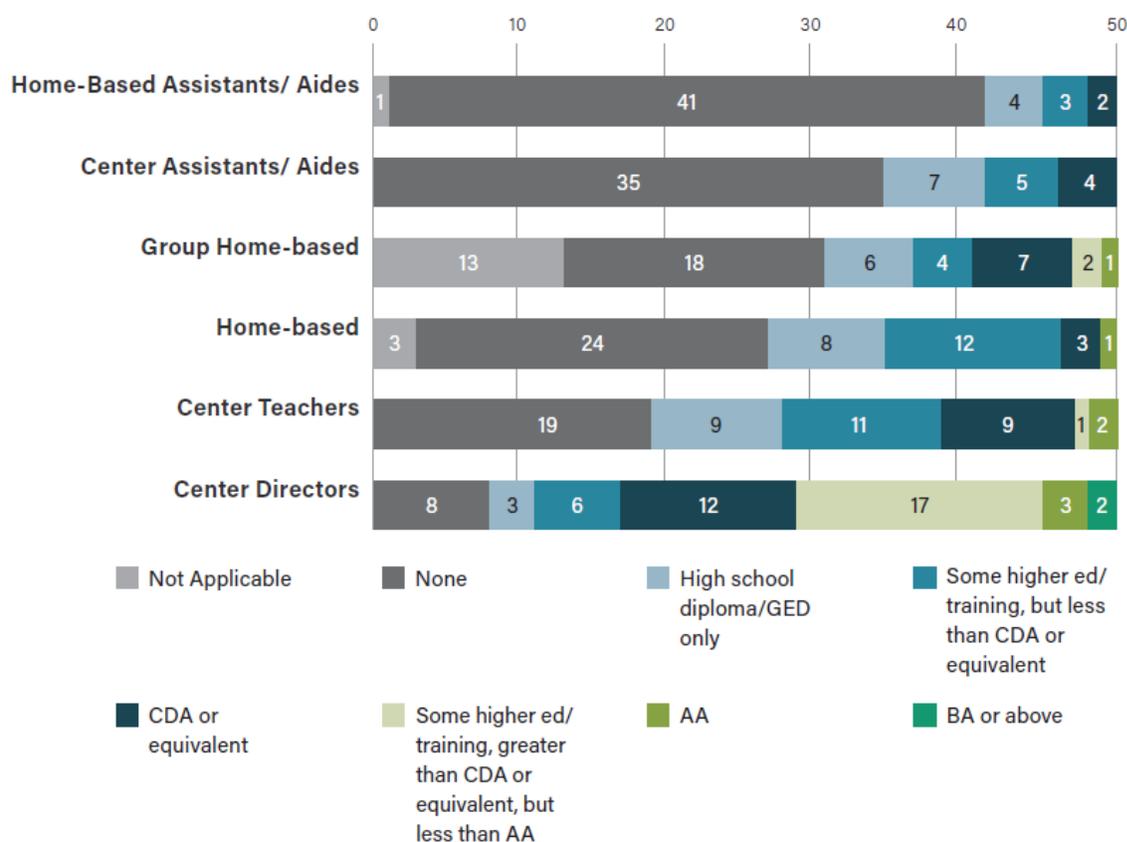
Where minimum qualifications for child care teaching staff and administrators exist, they vary greatly both within and across states, but in general are quite low compared to pre-K and K-3 requirements:

¹⁷ Text adapted from Whitebook et al. (2018a) and Early Educator Preparation Landscape.

¹⁸ Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G. & DiCrecchio, N. (2019). *The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

- Only New Jersey and Washington, D.C. require a bachelor’s degree or higher for child care center directors, and no state requires this degree for lead teachers.
- Only four states (Washington, D.C., Hawaii, Minnesota, Vermont) require a CDA for assistant or aides in center-based settings. Home-based educators are held to similarly low minimum requirements: just four states require a CDA or greater for home-based providers, and 41 states do not have any requirements at all for home-based assistants or aides (see figure below, derived from the *Early Childhood Workforce Index - 2018*).¹⁹

Minimum Qualification Requirements in State Licensing by ECE Role



Source: Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018a). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California.

In response, higher education institutions have created degree programs designed to meet the varied requirements that apply to early educators, resulting in a mix of early childhood-related degree programs both within and across states, rather than a unified, streamlined, and aligned system of higher education offerings. Higher education institutions may offer a variety of majors that contain some early childhood content — including majors in early childhood education, child development, and child and family studies — but these programs are often not designed primarily to

¹⁹ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

prepare individuals for teaching roles. A lack of detailed national and state data on ECE degree programs led CSCCE to develop the [Higher Education Inventory](#) — a survey tool used to describe the landscape of a state’s early childhood degree program offerings at the associate, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels, including variation in program goals, content, child age-group focus, student field-based learning, and faculty characteristics and professional development needs. To date, these inventories have allowed for an assessment of the gaps and opportunities in ECE degree offerings in 12 states (AR, CA, FL, IN, MS, NE, NH, NY, TN, OR, RI, and WA).

In addition to institutions of higher education offering bachelor’s and graduate degrees, community colleges play an important role in delivering both preparation and ongoing professional development for the early childhood workforce. They offer associate degree options for current and future early educators, serve as entry points for students hoping to pursue a bachelor’s degree, provide mid-career early childhood workers with training, and often provide professional development and other services to meet local ECE community needs. Over 75 percent of the nation’s 1,047 public community colleges offer some type of early childhood or family studies program.²⁰ Because community colleges often serve as important entry points to higher education, policies like allowing community colleges to offer bachelor’s degrees and articulation agreements that specify the transfer of credits between institutions can help early educators to advance from initial coursework or an associate degree to a bachelor’s degree.

- 25 states now allow at least some community colleges to offer bachelor’s degrees in at least some fields;²¹ of those at least eight allow community colleges to offer bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education (TX, WV, WA, NV, NM, IN, FL, and GA).²²
- 12 states (CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, MD, MS, NH, NM, NC, PA, and SC) have a statewide articulation agreement, though the practice of articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions may still be inconsistent across and within states, and students may still face barriers in transferring credit.

Despite barriers to higher education and low and uneven qualification *requirements* across the birth to five spectrum, many teachers working in school- and center-based early care and education programs have earned bachelor’s degrees, and most of these educators have completed some *early childhood development-related* college coursework. Similarly, more than one-third of early educators in home-based settings have earned at least an associate degree.

²⁰ Kaplan, M. (2018). *It Takes a Community: Leveraging Community College Capacity to Transform the Early Childhood Workforce*. Bellwether Education Partners. Retrieved from https://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Bellwether_CommunityCollege_JPK_Final.pdf.

²¹ Palmer, I. (2019) *Four-Year Degrees at the Community College Haven’t Scaled. Why?* New America. Retrieved from <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/four-year-at-the-community-college-havent-scaled-why/>.

²² Kaplan, M. (2018).

Achievement of higher education in ECE has been supported by scholarship programs such as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, operating in 21 states and Washington, D.C.²³ In addition to financial support, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships offer paid release time, counseling, and a bonus or small raise in recognition of advancing education. Outside of the T.E.A.C.H. program, some states have developed their own scholarship initiatives for early educators which may offer tuition assistance for college coursework, the CDA or equivalent credential, or a degree.²⁴

Nevertheless, due to the lack of uniformity in minimum educational requirements and funding across programs and settings, in any state, the qualifications children can expect their teachers to meet remain dependent on the type of programs that are available and affordable given their family's circumstances, rather than their developmental and educational needs. As noted above, there is some evidence that states are attempting to address more uniform and increased qualifications in state workforce plans or recommendations as well as in statutes. However, recent proposals to increase qualifications with new regulatory requirements have at times been met with resistance from early educators, program providers, and parents, due to a persistent lack of attention to working conditions and compensation for educators as well as a lack of public financing needed to adequately implement improved standards.

For more detailed findings and analysis of ECE educator preparation, see *Early Educator Preparation Landscape*:

https://earlyedcollaborative.org/assets/2020/12/EEIC_Report_EarlyEducatorPreparationLandscape_2020.pdf

Key Findings: Early Educator Work Environments

Educators' ability to apply their knowledge and skills and to continue to hone their practice requires a work environment that supports their ongoing learning, prioritizes time without child responsibilities for professional activities (such as planning, preparation, and reflection with colleagues), and offers dependable benefits that ensure their well-being. The K-12 literature is clear that school conditions facilitate or undermine even the best preparation and professional development. In ECE there is understandable and justifiable concern about preparation programs and access to them, but some interpret the weaknesses in preparation programs as a justification against degree requirements, while ignoring the reality that the quality of teaching practice is interdependent on workplace conditions, which in turn makes it harder to gain traction for necessary higher ed reform or investments in better workplace conditions.

²³ T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center (2019). *About the Center*. Retrieved from <https://teachecnationalcenter.org/about-the-center/>.

²⁴ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

In ECE, strategies focused on increased professional development and education for individual members of the workforce have historically dominated policy and practice, but the ingredients that influence early childhood workplace environments — what teachers need in addition to training and education in order to help children succeed — have been routinely overlooked in quality improvement efforts. Yet, just as children’s environments can support or impede their learning, work environments promote or hinder teachers’ practice and ongoing skill development.

CSCCE SEQUAL studies in several states,²⁵ as well as wider research articles and reports, have demonstrated that early childhood teachers routinely face insufficient teaching supports (such as the lack of paid non-child contact time to perform professional responsibilities) and inadequate rewards for their education and commitment (for example, low pay and lack of benefits, such as paid time off when sick or to take care of family members). These shortcomings contribute to economic worry and stress among teaching staff and fuel high levels of teacher turnover, preventing program improvement and making it increasingly challenging to attract and retain well-trained and educated teachers to work in early learning programs.

Despite international calls to articulate standards for adult working environments in early childhood, in the United States, standards for early educator work environments are rarely included in program standards or accreditation criteria at the national level.²⁶ With formal guidance at the national level practically non-existent,²⁷ state-level advocates and decision-makers have an opportunity to shape standards for work environments.

Given the complexity of the current ECE system, there are a variety of avenues by which states could both articulate standards and enforce them, including through the allocation of sufficient funding for providers to implement standards. These avenues could include licensing requirements or requirements attached to public funding, such as pre-K or child care contracts. An understanding of what benefits and supports are needed for good working environments could also be built into competencies, training, and higher education programs — teachers should understand what constitutes a good working environment, and those in leadership positions, such as directors and owners of home-based programs, should be trained on how to implement policies and practices to ensure supportive work environments. Given the lack of attention to such issues in national standards, it is unlikely that states have addressed this in their competencies, though we did not specifically look for this during our scan. Nevertheless, achieving strong working conditions ultimately will require building the capacity of program leaders to implement supportive working conditions.

²⁵ See Teachers’ Voices: Reflections on Working Conditions that Impact Practice and Program Quality (SEQUAL). Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/teacher-work-environments/sequal/teachers-voices/>.

²⁶ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

²⁷ While national standards for work environments have yet to be articulated via formal avenues like ECE program policies or accreditation criteria, 20 years ago an elaborate process led by center teaching staff and home-based providers was designed to identify such standards. “Model work standards” for both centers and homes were published in the late 1990s and used extensively in workshops with providers to support their implementation.

States also have an opportunity to encourage quality programs through their QRIS by including workplace and compensation policies among their quality criteria, focusing on teaching supports, adult well-being, and learning opportunities. As part of the 2016 and 2018 editions of the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, CSCCE performed a scan of the QRIS compendium to identify whether state QRIS include attention to workplace supports and compensation. Relevant indicators included in the compendium are: paid time for professional development; paid planning or preparation time; and salary scales or benefit options, such as health insurance or paid leave from work. Between 2016-2018 there was some progress on inclusion of these basic work environment elements in QRIS.²⁸ Nevertheless, it is still the case that work environments are less commonly addressed in QRIS than other elements. QRIS poses unique challenges for addressing standards for the workforce as a whole given the voluntary nature of QRIS in many states as well as a lack of funding for programs to implement these standards. In fact, the challenges of using QRIS as a means to articulate and require standards for work environments has led some states, such as Rhode Island, to roll back such workplace standards.

To some degree this likely reflects a lack of awareness and understanding of these issues on the part of state-level decision-makers. As part of the survey of states for the 2018 edition of the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, CSCCE asked state administrators to identify whether work environment standards were articulated and/or required within the following potential policy mechanisms: child care contracts, pre-K policies, licensing, QRIS, competencies. These data were not published due to quality concerns, in part because subsequent review of the documents administrators shared suggest that state administrators could not always reliably identify whether or not workplace standards such as those mentioned above are articulated in relevant policies. This review further suggested that little is being done at the state level to articulate standards for work environments, despite lengthy requirements for programs more generally (e.g., child care licensing) and concerted state efforts to develop recommended competencies and career levels.

We also know from NIEER's State of Preschool Yearbooks that even in public pre-K programs, where workplace standards should be easier to implement due to greater public funding and authority to set standards, access to these supports is not guaranteed, particularly for pre-K teachers in community-based settings. 16 states have policies requiring equivalent paid time for public pre-K teachers for planning, meetings, and reporting as for K-3 teachers, but only seven states have such policies for pre-K teachers in community-based settings.²⁹

This gap in attention to work environments may be related to a lack of teacher voice in decision-making circles, as discussed below in key findings on political momentum.

²⁸ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

²⁹ Friedman-Krauss et al. (2019).

Key Findings: Early Educator Compensation

While working conditions for early educators broadly have received little attention, the conversation about better compensation for early educators has gained a great deal of momentum in recent years, though there remains limited action to date.

Low wages persist within the early childhood sector, despite increased expectations for teachers. 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. Understanding whether states have already implemented strategies to address low ECE teacher compensation, or have plans to do so, is an indication of taking seriously the detrimental effects of low wages on the provision of high-quality ECE services.

There is a hierarchy of pay within ECE where the younger the child taught, the lower the pay: ECE teachers are generally lower paid than K-3 teachers, and teachers working with infants and toddlers earn less than those working with preschool children on average.³⁰ There are also racial/ethnic disparities in pay within ECE. For example, even after controlling for educational attainment, African American teaching staff earn lower wages than white teaching staff (\$0.78 less per hour, or \$1,622.40 less per year, for a full-time, full-year worker).³¹

Employer-offered health and retirement benefits are included in pay packages provided to the vast majority of public school teachers, but such benefits are less common for ECE teachers, though this varies by setting and funding stream.³² For example, in 2012 (prior to full implementation of the Affordable Care Act) one-quarter of all ECE teachers were estimated to have no health coverage, whether through a spouse, public agency, or employer. Close to two-thirds of ECE teachers in school-sponsored or Head Start-funded settings had access to health insurance via their employer in 2012, while less than one-third of ECE teachers in other settings had such access. No national data is available on access to other workplace benefits, but recent state-level data can serve as an illustration: in North Carolina in 2015, only 39 percent of centers offered paid retirement benefits.

To date there has been greater movement to align publicly funded pre-K teacher pay with K-3 teachers, compared with the rest of ECE. Nevertheless, we know from data collected for NIEER’s latest preschool yearbook³³ that there are still disparities: most states do not have policies supporting

³⁰ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Whitebook, M. & McLean, C. (2017). *Educator Expectations, Qualifications, and Earnings: Shared Challenges and Divergent Systems in ECE and K-12*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

³³ Friedman-Krauss et al. (2019).

compensation parity for pre-K teachers, and those that do rarely include teachers in private settings. Although 25 states require all preschool teachers to hold a bachelor's degree *and* certification, only Hawaii, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island also require equal starting salaries and salary schedules between all preschool and K–3 teachers. Alabama requires all preschool teachers to hold a bachelor's degree and has policies to ensure equal starting salaries and salary schedules with K–3 teachers, but does not require certification. Ten states require state-funded preschool teachers in both public and nonpublic settings to have a bachelor's degree but have starting salary and salary schedule parity policies *only* for preschool teachers in public schools, while twelve other states require a bachelor's degree but report no preschool teacher salary parity policies.

In states requiring the same degree requirements for all teachers, almost 70 percent (of those with data) reported wage disparities where preschool public school teachers earned up to \$21,136 more than private preschool teachers in the same program. Disparities are even larger when comparing state-funded preschool teachers where a bachelor's degree is required to public school K–3 teachers. Preschool pay gaps of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year are common.

The outlook is even worse for benefits. No state has been able to ensure parity of benefits for community-based teachers, although several have efforts toward ensuring these teachers have access to benefits. For example, in Alabama, classroom grants to community-based providers include funds specifically for the purposes of providing benefits, but the pre-K program does not have explicit rules about the type and level of benefits teachers must receive.

Outside of publicly funded pre-K, very little has been achieved in terms of policies designed to increase wages/benefits:

- Unlike in pre-K, no states set *required* compensation standards for early educators in other settings. A few states (e.g. Rhode Island, North Carolina, Washington, and Washington, D.C.) have developed or are currently developing guidance around what salary scales for early educators should look like. In Vermont, guidance around compensation is built into their QRIS: programs must pay all employees at least 85 percent of Vermont's livable wage order to receive points for this criteria in their rating. However participation in these standards and in QRIS overall is not required of providers.
- Only two states (Massachusetts and Rhode Island) have developed initiatives to improve benefits for early educators outside of pre-K. In both instances these initiatives provide funding (via child care subsidies) to home-based providers in order to ensure access to paid sick time.
- Only two states designate funding (outside of pre-K) specifically for early educator salaries: Massachusetts has a rate reserve in their child care subsidy funding for early educator salaries, while Montana's QRIS requires programs to allocate a portion of their incentive dollars toward the base pay of early educators.

As noted in the work environment assessment, a lack of teacher voice in decision-making is likely a central reason that early educator compensation has yet to be addressed in any meaningful way, in addition to governance and financing challenges in ECE. Of note, in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, collective bargaining by early educators was instrumental to the passage of compensation

initiatives. The Massachusetts rate reserve resulted from concerted organizing by center-based teachers represented by District 65 UAW in the 1980s and more recently has been extended to family child care via collective bargaining by home based providers participating in local Service Employees International Union (SEIU) chapters. Similarly, Rhode Island sick time provisions for home-based providers resulted from collective bargaining by local SEIU chapters.

While tangible policies and initiatives to improve compensation for early educators have so far been limited, compensation has been clearly identified as a pressing need in many states' early childhood plans and several states have been actively engaged in planning efforts to develop strategies and recommendations. For example, several states have been working with the T.E.A.C.H. National Center to learn about strategies for addressing low wages in the field and to come up with action plans for their states, including advocacy campaigns and increased funding for child care providers to help cover costs (see Table 1). Stakeholders in Washington state initiated a working group to think through recommendations for addressing compensation.³⁴

In the absence of the financing reform that is required to truly make progress on compensation, similar to what was outlined in the Transforming the Financing consensus report,³⁵ many states have enacted initiatives to provide immediate financial relief to early educators. Twelve states have a statewide stipend program, such as WAGE\$ or similar, and two states (Louisiana and Nebraska) offer ECE teacher tax credits (see Table 2). While these initiatives have been successful in getting urgently needed funds into the hands of early educators, they do not fundamentally alter the wage structure of early education jobs, which is required for long-term sustainability of the field.

Additionally, as currently implemented, they have several limitations.³⁶ Only a fraction of early educators benefit from these stipend and tax credit programs. Not all states collect or report data on the number of participants in these programs, but for those that do, the median number of educators receiving stipends is 614 per state, ranging from 42 educators receiving stipends in Iowa to 6,303 educators receiving tax credits in Louisiana. Due to lack of data, it is unclear whether these stipends and tax credits are disproportionately awarded to certain sub-populations of the ECE workforce. Award levels typically differ within states based on educational level and also vary substantially across the states, though the amounts are 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. Across states, the median award amount on the low end of the range is \$500, while the median award amount on the high end is \$3,000, and for programs that could provide data on average award amounts, the median across states is \$1,598.

Nevertheless, as a short-term strategy to keep early educators in the classroom, there has been growing interest in these initiatives in recent years: Delaware implemented the WAGE\$ program in

³⁴ Abrams et.al. "Report to the Washington State Legislature: Compensation Technical Workgroup." Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families, April 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/CompensationTechWrkgrpRprt.pdf>.

³⁵ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24984>.

³⁶ McLean et al. (2019).

2017; North Carolina recently created a new Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ stipend in addition to WAGE\$; and at least five states (Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Mississippi) were considering tax credits for early educators just in the previous legislative session. Although such stipend and tax credit strategies are limited in their ability to solve the ECE pay crisis, most states are and have been doing nothing at all. The fact that some states are attempting to move forward is an important signal of their willingness to engage with difficult challenges in ECE reform efforts.

Table 1: Summary of States by Compensation Efforts

Participated in TEACH Moving the Needle on Compensation Project	Developed a salary scale for early educators outside pre-K	Dedicates some funding for wages outside pre-K	Policy/initiative to provide benefits outside pre-K	Salary parity for all pre-K teachers
Florida Indiana Iowa Michigan Minnesota Nebraska North Carolina Ohio Rhode Island Texas Wisconsin	Connecticut Washington, D.C. Rhode Island North Carolina Washington	Massachusetts Montana	Massachusetts Rhode Island	Alabama Hawaii New Jersey Oklahoma

Table 2: Summary of States by Financial Relief Efforts

Stipends for Early Educators	Tax Credits for Early Educators
Delaware Washington, D.C. Georgia Illinois Kansas Maryland	Minnesota New Mexico North Carolina Pennsylvania Utah Wisconsin
	Louisiana Nebraska

Key Findings: Political Momentum

A core area of research for this 50-state scan was an understanding of recent political momentum that could be leveraged to advance workforce reforms. We endeavored to understand both the broader political context and momentum to advance ECE in a general sense as well as momentum to advance the preparation, support, and compensation of the ECE workforce in particular. We

suspected, and were correct, that broad political momentum and advocacy pertaining to ECE in general would not necessarily mean that states were also deeply engaged in campaigns or other efforts to advance the workforce in particular, as efforts to increase funding for ECE may prioritize access and affordability for children and families over the quality of the services, for which the workforce is key.

General political momentum

Political leadership can provide the necessary political will to create, scale up, sustain, and adequately fund high-quality early education priorities. Political will is based on actions of the governor and legislature not just their statements. Enacted legislation that increases ECE state spending, quality standards, and enrollment are the strongest indicators. In addition to elected officials, appointed leaders, local advocates, local philanthropy, business leaders, and other state research experts support the leadership and advocacy component of a state's political will.

Political Context

We were able to identify recent (within the past two years), enacted legislation that supported early childhood efforts in most states. The most common movement was related to the workforce, and is discussed further in the following section. Other successful legislation included increased spending, for access (AL, AK, CA, IL, KS, MD, NJ, TX, and WA) and funding mechanisms or allocation (LA, MS, NJ, OR, and WA); maintaining the state's QRIS system or increasing quality expectations (DE, NY, and WA), and supporting parents in selecting ECE programs (NE). A comprehensive P-3 act was enacted in Washington, D.C, a Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed, a unified state governance structure in New Mexico was created, and support was seen for kindergarten (California and Colorado).

Some of the political will efforts were led by governors, such as Hutchinson (AR, Rep), Newsom (CA, Dem), Polis (CO, Dem), Carney (DE, Dem), Pritzker (IL, Dem), Kelly (KS, Dem), Edwards (LA, Dem), Mills (ME, Dem), Whitmer (MI, Dem), Walz (MN, Dem), Murphy (NJ, Dem), Grisham (NM, Dem), Cooper (NC, Dem), Brown (OR, Dem), Wolf (PA, Dem), Raimondo (RI, Dem), Scott (VT, Rep), and Evers (WI, Dem) even if they were not always successful. Those that were successful typically had strong ECE champions in the legislature as well. Other states experienced ECE efforts thwarted by governors (AK (Rep), IA (Rep)) or had leaders not seen as vocal on ECE policies (AZ (Rep), NE (Rep)).

In addition, 16 states (FL, HI, IL, LA, MD, MA, MN, NY, NC, OH, OR, PA, SC, VT, WV, WI) had pending legislation related to ECE programs or policies when the scan was conducted in June 2019, including state budgets. Idaho, Indiana, South Dakota, and Wyoming do not have state funded pre-K and did not have any passed legislation that would have supported its creation; whereas North Dakota created a pre-K pilot program and Utah continued funding for a reading initiative. At least six states (IA, KY, LA, MO, NE, and TX) experienced cuts in preschool spending or supporting a move to universal pre-K (MS, MO, and MT).

Advocacy

Most states have local advocates who campaign for ECE-related priorities. However, the number of advocates, their sophistication and effectiveness, as well as the depth of the priorities, including covering birth to kindergarten, varies widely in the states. Some examples of successful campaigns and varied work by advocates we found include:

- Arkansas: Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families leads the Invest Early Coalition's public awareness and advocacy campaign on workforce issues and joined forces with Forward Campaign to create the Partnership for PreK movement working on a common policy agenda. Forward Arkansas is focused on children's education 0-8.
- New Jersey: Pre-K Our Way leads the pre-K expansion campaign which has been highly successful; Advocates for Children in New Jersey is a long-standing, strong supporter of 0-8 policies (especially active on infant and toddler reimbursement rates) and workforce qualifications and compensation (0-8). The Education Law Center, that litigated the Abbott v. Burke funding case which led to the Supreme Court ordering high-quality pre-K for over 20 percent of NJ's three and four year olds, plays an important watchdog role in funding and quality.
- New York: Numerous advocates (state and local) are vocal on the importance of pre-K, including K-12 advocacy groups. Many advocates are working together on a campaign to acknowledge access to high-quality pre-K as a constitutional right
- Texas: A number of influential advocacy groups are active in early childhood (Children at Risk, Raise Your Hand Texas, Texans Care for Children, United Way of Texas, and Frontera Strategies). Children at Risk have been engaging state and local workforce investment boards to develop strategies to support the ECE workforce. There is a workgroup of 50+ advocates across the state that convenes monthly. Additionally, the Texas Education Grantmakers' Advocacy Consortium not only funds advocacy and research efforts but provides support to their members to be advocates themselves.
- Washington: Education advocacy groups work together under the leadership of the Children's Alliance and a subset formed the Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA), a coordinated and organized statewide coalition focused on advocating for state policies and investments in early learning.

There are philanthropies in most states that fund ECE initiatives; however, the level of spending and funding priorities vary widely with many small foundations providing small support grants directly to ECE providers. Stand out states with large funding amounts and/or coalitions of philanthropies include Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana (mostly not local funders), Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma (mostly Tulsa), Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

Several states have strong business leaders, including PNC and Ready Nation Support. Large cities in the following states have established their own city-funded preschool programs which can be influential in moving state policy (CA, CO, IL, MA, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, TX, and WA). We identified 15 states (CA, CT, IL, MA, MD, MI, MN, NE, NJ, NC, NY, OK, VA, WA, and WI) that have ECE

research institutes or strong ECE faculty/research experts in their states who contribute an authoritative voice on ECE and workforce policy.

ECE workforce-specific political momentum

In addition to a broader scan of state leadership, advocacy communities, and overall political climates related to ECE, we undertook a detailed scan of state-based political momentum as it pertains to the ECE workforce specifically. This included:

- Understanding the extent to which the funder and advocacy communities are focused on ECE workforce-specific issues and campaigns and/or have strong early educator representation through professional associations or unions;
- Analyzing state planning documents (Child Care and Development Fund state plans, Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five applications, state-specific early childhood plans) to identify articulated goals and efforts pertaining to strengthening early educator preparation, support and/or compensation; and,
- Identifying and analyzing evidence of recent action pertaining to the workforce including: use of federal grant funds for workforce activities, recent legislative activity pertaining to the workforce, and participation in workforce-focused projects/workgroups such as those hosted by the National Governors' Association/Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Alliance for Early Success.

Our analysis shows that in many states there is clear evidence of recent ECE-workforce focused political momentum, demonstrated through state goal planning, participation in national projects focused on the workforce, and recent legislative efforts. We were less able to evaluate the strength of various advocacy groups' commitment to supports for the workforce, or their priorities within such an agenda, but this is partly due to our methods at the 50-state stage; gathering this type of information is more properly suited to interviews with stakeholders in particular states.

Though there were a few states in which there is essentially no identifiable workforce-specific political momentum (Alaska, Idaho, South Dakota, and Wyoming), most states have some form of effort currently or recently going on, even if in a limited way, while about 1/3 of the states had a high degree of identifiable momentum across several of the areas discussed previously. Nevertheless, despite increased conversation regarding the ECE workforce, meaningful action to date remains limited.

Funding and Advocacy Communities

We were able to identify evidence of workforce-focused funder activity in all but 16 states and workforce-focused advocacy groups (including but not limited to active AEYC organizations, unions) in all but 19 states. Many of these "workforce-focused" advocacy groups and campaigns do not have workforce issues as their sole or even their primary agendas but include an emphasis (some stronger than others) on the workforce within broader advocacy for early care and education services for children and parents. Though it might be assumed that all ECE advocacy groups include some attention to workforce issues, this is not necessarily the case as many ECE advocacy groups

and campaigns have emphasized access for children and families without also championing the needs of practitioners.

Given the reality that early educator supports and well-being are not often priorities within ECE advocacy, we were especially interested in identifying avenues for channeling the collective voice of early educators. Unions and professional associations are an obvious place to start, but we know from national data sources that membership in these organizations is currently low in ECE. K-12 teachers' working conditions have largely been shaped by collective bargaining agreements, with nearly half of elementary and middle school teachers being members of unions,³⁷ and even teachers who are not official members of unions still benefit from union negotiation and collective bargaining agreements.³⁸

History of Organizing Efforts in ECE

Union organizing efforts in early care and education over the last half century tell a story of limited success and many obstacles. Following the withdrawal of wartime federal child care funding at the close of WW2, some state and local dollars were invested in child care (notably in California and New York) and unionizing occurred among early childhood teachers, mainly in programs operating in K-12 school settings.

The establishment of Head Start and the expansion of public pre-K over subsequent decades was accompanied by organizing efforts in some programs and communities, mostly those operating in public schools or large community service agencies. In the late seventies and eighties teacher-led groups often experimented in unionizing, with greater and lesser degrees of success, but turnover, interpretation of National Labor Relations Board rules, and the small size of most child care programs, worked against significantly expanding the proportion of the workforce covered by collective bargaining agreements.

District 65, United Auto Workers (UAW) organized many centers receiving public funds in Massachusetts during the eighties and nineties and American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Education Association (NEA), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSMCE) continued to represent center-based early educators, mostly in Head Start and school-based services. Almost

³⁷ Whitebook et al. (2017).

³⁸ Robson, K., Pennington, K., and Squire, J. (2018). "Overview of the History and Status of Teachers' Unions." Bellwether Education Partners. Retrieved from https://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Janus_BELLWETHER.pdf.

exclusively unionizing has focused on services operating with public contracts, or in the case of home-based care – public vouchers, sidestepping programs relying solely on parent fees. The one exception was a concerted organizing drive among KinderCare and LePetit Academy teachers by District 65, UAW which encountered strong pushback from the companies and was ultimately unsuccessful.

No union dedicated to early childhood educators emerged during this period of activity, although there were discussions about the need for one based on various critiques of existing unions and a desire to build a powerful voice for those working directly with young children on a daily basis in early childhood settings. The emergence of the AFT at the turn of the century had served to pressure the NEA to pursue a collective bargaining strategy for K-12 teachers. The multiple unions and therefore more dispersed representation of early educators did not pose the same type of challenge to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to step up efforts to consider the workplace needs of its teacher members, who constituted only one of many “interest groups” among its membership, which to this day also includes those representing employer, merchandising, and higher education interests. Additionally, during this period, union membership was declining across industries, which reduced the likelihood of a strong union-based organizing effort that was likely to threaten NAEYC’s role as the primary early childhood organization in the country.

In the 1990s, pressure on NAEYC to address the workplace needs of its teacher/provider members did come, however, from the Worthy Wage Campaign (WWC) which was teacher/provider-led and relied on the active engagement of NAEYC chapters and other local teacher groups across the country who joined. The WWC resulted from more than a decade of organizing by local teachers’ groups across the country who formed a caucus within NAEYC to pressure the organization to address workplace and pay issues, to little effect. The WWC was coordinated at the national level by the Child Care Employee Project (CCEP), later called the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW), and was designed to bring public awareness to the plight of the workforce and to galvanize local efforts to secure gains through policy for early educators and to build a strong and organized teacher voice, which in turn, was hoped would build significant pressure on NAEYC to be more proactive about the needs of early educators.

While there were those who wanted the WWC to develop the capacity to represent teachers on the jobs, the major unions involved with child care (District 65, UAW, AFT, SEIU, AFSCME, NEA) who supported the campaign, saw its potential for expanding their own membership rather than building a new union or organization, particularly in light of declining resources in the labor movement generally. AFSCME and SEIU most actively sought to organize Worthy Wage members, notably in Seattle and Philadelphia, and in both instances the challenges of organizing centers due to size and turnover resulted in a shift in strategy toward organizing home-based providers, where they have experienced comparatively greater success over the last two decades. The Center for the Child Care Workforce (formerly CCEP) eventually was taken over by AFT and now serves as a hub for resources for AFT represented early childhood teachers with some efforts to expand membership and interface with child care policy.

Although ECE teachers in school-sponsored settings approach the union membership rates of K-12 teachers (44 percent), the presence of labor unions in ECE across settings is much more limited. ECE teachers in school-sponsored settings only make up about six percent of the workforce, and so across settings, only ten percent of center-based teaching staff are members of a union.³⁹ This disparity is further evident in an examination of pre-K programs by state: NIEER's State of Preschool Yearbooks have demonstrated that pre-K teachers in public school settings are typically included in wider collective bargaining agreements by K-12 teachers, but this is typically not the case for pre-K teachers in community-based settings. Data from the most recent yearbook shows that in 13 pre-K programs lead teachers in public school settings are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, but in no states are lead teachers in community-based settings covered.⁴⁰

Similar data on unionization are not available for home-based providers. However, we know that unions (AFSCME, often with another union partner, and SEIU; UFT in New York City only) representing home-based providers in at least 11 states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, Illinois, New York, and New Mexico) have the authority to negotiate with the state about payment rates and other workplace rules on their behalf.⁴¹ Collective bargaining is much less common in center-based child care, in part because the small size of many operators creates barriers to organizing, although some Head Start programs that are part of municipal, county, or other government agencies have union representation.

Today many state-level AEYCs are the only organization in a state with a strong focus on the needs of early educators, but AEYCs often serve in an administrative capacity (e.g. administering TEACH scholarships, training and professional development) as well as in an advocacy capacity, which has the potential to limit their ability to critique existing initiatives and efforts. As noted above, local AEYC affiliates have been historically important for grassroots early educator organizing efforts such as the Worthy Wages campaign. We learned that there has been a substantial decline in local AEYC affiliates in the states (from about 270 affiliates to about 52) since 2017 as a result of transformation and branding processes led by NAEYC as the parent organization.⁴² This decline potentially makes it more difficult for early educators themselves to organize locally to voice their concerns and to advocate for solutions, though more research is needed. Whether the conditions are now ripe for a renewed organizing effort of some kind — a consortium of unions representing early educators,

³⁹ Whitebook et al. (2017).

⁴⁰ In many states this is a local decision for both public and non-public settings. In New Jersey's program there was an initial agreement that salaries of teachers in public and private providers would be guided by the union contract even though the teachers were not union members.

⁴¹ Whitebook et al (2018a). See also: Blank, H., Campbell, N.D., and Entmacher, J. (2013). "Getting Organized: Unionizing Home-Based Child Care Providers 2013 Update." National Women's Law Center.

Retrieved from https://nwlc-ciw49tixqw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/nwlc_gettingorganized2013update.pdf.

Carrillo, O. (April 2019). "What Collective Bargaining Can Mean for Child Care Providers." SEIU Local 99: Education Workers United. Retrieved from <https://www.seiu99.org/2019/04/09/what-collective-bargaining-can-mean-for-child-care-providers/>

⁴² Email correspondence with Lauren Hogan, NAEYC, July 17, 2019.

some labor-management coalition, more concerted organizing through Power to the Profession, or a new form of organization or organizing campaign more generally — is a question being considered with more seriousness, as the crisis in filling early childhood jobs intensifies and efforts to improve quality fall short from continued insufficient supports and pay for early educators.

State Plans & Goals

States have articulated existing efforts and goals for early childhood in their states in a variety of recent state planning documents such as the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) plans (2019-2021) and applications for the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5). In addition, many though not all states have produced state-specific planning documents pertaining to overall goals for early care and education, and some states have such documents specifically for goals related to the ECE workforce. Our research team scanned the CCDF plans primarily to identify additional existing efforts pertaining to the child care workforce that may not already be represented in CSCCE's most recent *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, and those findings were accordingly incorporated into our assessment of policy efforts for teacher preparation, support, and compensation. We focused more on the PDG B-5 applications and state-specific early childhood plans for understanding momentum, as these documents represent state-specific goals and agendas to a greater extent than the CCDF plans, which are primarily used as assessment tools by the federal Office of Child Care to ensure state compliance with federal rules.

All but six states were awarded federal PDG B-5 grant funding, though three states (Alaska, Florida, and Vermont) had not published their applications at the time of our scan. Overall, most states addressed the workforce in their applications in some capacity, but this was usually limited to their needs assessments (lack of information about their workforce) or to plans to strengthen professional development. Only a few states discussed supporting teachers to achieve specific credentials (Colorado, Missouri, and Ohio) or increasing compensation (Illinois and North Carolina). We focused in particular on state-specific early childhood plans, as these are not required for states in order to receive federal funding, but demonstrate a certain level of state initiative and willingness to take seriously the issues of early care and education and of the workforce specifically. Only about half the states had recent plans that we were able to find, but those that did typically addressed the workforce in some way, though similarly to the PDG B-5 applications, there was often a large emphasis on strengthening training and professional development and very few addressed the teacher work environment beyond some mention of the need for better compensation (see Table 3). While some states built their discussion of workforce goals into broader early childhood planning (e.g. North Carolina), others have published planning documents focused solely on a workforce agenda (e.g. Colorado). Few states had clear, compelling visions for how to move forward, particularly in terms of addressing preparation as well as teacher work environments and compensation. Illinois' *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce (2018): A Call to Action for the State of Illinois*⁴³ stood out for endorsing the compensation recommendations laid out in the

⁴³ Main, C., and Yarbrough, K.W. (October 2018). "Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce: A Call to Action for the State of Illinois." Chicago: Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development & University of Illinois at Chicago School of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/TTransforming%20the%20Early%20Childhood%20Workforce%20IL%20Report.pdf>.

Transforming the Financing consensus report ,as well as well-developed recommendations pertaining to teacher preparation, including:

- Increasing qualification requirements for all positions across the ECE workforce that do not currently meet or exceed national recommendations;
- Develop clear, coordinated, competency-based pathways for early childhood educators to achieve set qualifications via coordination with institutions of higher education (IHEs) (aligning coursework/assessments with competencies, supporting articulation and transfer);
- Intentionally support minority students and workforce members to increase their degree and credential attainment; and,
- Promote workplace conditions that support teacher development.

Table 3: Summary of Early Childhood Workforce-Related Plans in 26 States

State	Title of Plan	Key Points
AZ	Advancing Arizona’s Early Childhood System: First Things First Strategic Plan FY2018-2022 (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by increasing higher education (HE) institutions with degree requirements linked to competencies that support movement from high school to AA to BA · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation
CA	Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: Implementation Plan for the State of California (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by increasing HE capacity and a focus on standards for certification · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation
	California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education Final Report (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by increasing HE capacity, apprenticeship, access for diverse groups; competency-based approach to reforms · Supports salary parity from TK-3 and increased compensation for rest of ECE · No strategy pertaining to work environments
CO	Colorado’s Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Plan (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by streamlining qualification requirements, articulation agreements, alternative pathways (apprenticeships, high school programs), and professional development · Supports using research-based tools to measure quality of work environments and share recommendations with employers · Supports increasing compensation via salary parity, benefits, wage supplements, shared services, and loan forgiveness
CT	Early Care and Education Action Plan (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No detailed strategies pertaining to preparation, work environments, compensation
DE	Early Childhood Education Teachers 2.0: Strategies to Transform the Profession (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways through apprenticeships, website of teacher prep programs, improving recruitment (middle/high school programs); created standards for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to address ECE needs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recommends research on the impact of the integration of occupational health and safety practices (wellness, stress reduction, and self-care) into ECE settings · Recommends increasing compensation by increasing rates and helping providers use funds efficiently
DC	Birth to Three For All DC (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation through changes to child care licensing rules · Supports compensation parity for infant-toddler teachers · No strategy pertaining to work environments · This is actual legislation but is not fully funded so constitutes a “plan” of sorts
	Implementation Plan for Competency-Based Career Pathways (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways and compensation through establishing a common set of quality standards for competencies at different levels, including suggested compensation levels at identified competencies, and assessed via a certification/credential process · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Came out of the Transforming the Workforce implementation project; clear timeline and appears to be in the final stages of development now
HI	Hawaii Early Childhood State Plan 2019-2024 (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways through apprenticeship and mentorship programs; simplifying pathways and improving access · Supports increasing compensation through wage supplements and educational supports · No strategy pertaining to work environments
IL	Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by increasing qualification requirements to meet or exceed national recommendations; implement public policies and preparation programs that support minority students/workforce members to increase their credentials; promote workplace conditions that increase access to attain credentials; and develop clear, coordinated, competency-based pathways for EC educators to achieve set qualifications, focusing on role of IHEs · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Endorses the Transforming the Financing recommendations to increase compensation
	Early Childhood Workforce Project (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by increasing teachers with state-specific credentials, providing scholarships and supporting math coursework · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation
	Achieving Compensation Parity: Illinois Goal for the Field of Early Childhood Care and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation through loan forgiveness and full scholarships for academically talented high school students · Supports opportunities for peer interactions and relationship-based professional development to improve instructional practices and enhance job satisfaction · Recommends salary levels at parity for BA-level teachers and \$15/hour minimum. (This will require 80 percent of all rate enhancements and quality incentives to be budgeted for compensation; ExceleRate program standards; that all new requests for federal EC funding include allocations for BA-level teaching and administrative staff salaries; adjusting state grants, contracts, rates, and quality financial incentives to allow for incremental increases in minimum staff salaries.)
IA	Iowa’s Policy Audit to Improve ECE Workforce (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation through high school pipelines, apprenticeships, access to community college, aligning requirements across different settings, and developing a 10-15 year plan to increase the educational requirements across child care roles/ settings · Recommends increasing compensation through creating a tiered reimbursement system · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Conducted during state cohort project (National Governor’s Association)

KY	Progress and Next Steps for Early Childhood in Kentucky: Birth through Third Grade (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by aligning and expanding professional development and equipping teachers to implement culturally responsive instruction · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation
LA	Funding Our Future: B to 3 by Louisiana's Early Childhood Care and Education Commission (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recommends increasing state funding for compensation · No strategy pertaining to work environments or preparation
MD	Report on Developing a Master Plan on Professional Development for Teachers and Providers of Early Childhood Education (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation through expanding/enhancing pathways to a BA and certification by providing career mentoring, increasing high school internships, and aligning requirements between high school, CDA, and community college programs · Supports strengthening career pathways by allowing students to transfer credits from the CDA and AAT to ECE degree programs (one suggestion on this is to make the CDA a prerequisite for ECE degree programs); promotes scholarship options for teachers to attain a degree through the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation · Plan was mandated by legislature
	Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education Interim Report (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recommends making teacher preparation programs more rigorous and raising licensing standards for new teachers · Recommends that the school day be reorganized to allow teachers to have more time to improve instruction, plan lessons, tutor students, and participate in collaborative professional learning · Recommends expansions to pre-K (3- and 4-year-olds), with provision of comparable salaries for pre-K teachers, and raising teacher pay equal with other highly trained professions with comparable education requirements; while teacher wages and salaries will continue to be collectively negotiated at the local level, the state will conduct periodic benchmarking of teacher salaries with other professions · This is about teachers in general, including pre-K but not the rest of ECE
	Implementation Plan for Competency-Based Career Pathways (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways and compensation through establishing a common set of quality standards for competencies at different levels, including suggested compensation levels at identified competencies, and assessed via a certification/credential process · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Came out of the Transforming the Workforce implementation project; clear timeline and appears to be in the final stages of development now
MA	Kids First: A Blueprint for Investing in Our Future (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation through increasing baseline educator requirements for licensing and professional development requirements; ensuring that all of Department of Early Education and Care professional development curriculum aids educators in achieving a bachelor's degree or beyond; expanding the EC Educators Scholarship program; developing a loan forgiveness program for students who commit to working in a high-need public school district; and eliminating bureaucratic barriers from licensure and teacher development policies · Recommends providing enough time in the school day for professional development, including collaboration with other teachers · Recommends raising early educator rates for high-quality programs to at least the 75th market rate percentile and differentiated pay for qualifying educators in high-need districts
MI	Revised ESSA plan (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Indicates that state funds will go toward compensation and career pathways for early educators; suggests implementing systems of differential pay and encouraging local education agencies (LEAs) to use funding resources towards greater pay equity · No strategy pertaining to work environments

	Building a Better Child Care System (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No strategy pertaining to work environments or preparation · Recommends increasing compensation through scholarship programs such as TEACH, income tax credits, and linking professional development activities to bonuses or pay increases
MN	Transforming Minnesota's EC Workforce (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by expanding access to the CDA (increase offerings and eligibility for college credit, and ensure there is clear articulation to a two-year degree); increase funding for TEACH, REETAIN, and CDA Scholarships; and continue the Transfer Pathways work so students can articulate from 2-year to 4-year colleges without loss of time, credits, or money · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Supports the recommendations from the National Academies Report on Transforming the Financing of Early Childhood, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment and Minnesota's National Governor's Taskforce on Compensation into Phases One and Two of the Minnesota's Workplan [see below] · A ten-year plan to implement the recommendations chosen from the Transforming the Workforce report
	Minnesota's Workforce Compensation Advisory Group Summary Report and Recommendations (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No strategy pertaining to work environments or teacher preparation · Recommends increasing compensation through individual tax credits as supplements to pay and/or reward for educational attainment and provider tax credits for meeting quality standards, or for increasing staff compensation; increased funding for T.E.A.C.H. and R.E.E.T.A.I.N.; tying compensation and quality; researching the Wage Ladder concept; promoting to the private sector the advantages and opportunities for providing child care to employees; implementing the plan of Transforming the Workforce made in collaboration with the National Academy of Sciences and raising awareness about the need for a well-trained, well compensated EC workforce
	Minnesota's Great Workforce for ECE (2015) and Professional Development for Minnesota's Childcare and ECE Workforce (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Primarily addresses professional development (PD) goals/strategies
NE	Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission Overview (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways through aligning credentials and integrating into HE · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Recommends identifying sources of funding to ensure adequate ECE compensation
NV	Nevada ECAC Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by advocating for greater investment in wage and incentive programs that reward increased education levels, as well as unifying requirements, rewards, and expectations for EC teachers, as they are for elementary teachers · No strategy pertaining to compensation or work environments · Previous strategic plan focused on competencies and wage supplements
NH	New Hampshire Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by developing competencies, PD · No strategy pertaining to work environments or compensation
NM	New Mexico Child Care and Early Education Task Force Report (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by focusing on pipelines from high school to community college and accessing HE (course scheduling, child care access, TEACH) · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Recommends increasing compensation by supporting organizations that advocate for higher wages in EC programs
NY	NYS Board of Regents Early Childhood Workgroup's Blue Ribbon Committee Final Recommendations (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by funding \$2.5M to implement competency-based pre-service teacher preparation programs and in-service PD focused on cultural competence

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways by creating a statewide strategy to incentivize EC educators to advance along the state's career pathway ladder, encompassing all levels of education; changing teacher requirements from birth-2nd grade certificate to a concentration in Infant/Toddler, Pre-K, 1-2, Bilingual Education, Special Education or a combination thereof, while being able to teach across multiple grades; and recruiting a diverse workforce who reflect the race, background, and/or culture of their students · No strategy pertaining to work environment or compensation
NC	The North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recommends increasing the rigor and responsiveness of teacher preparation programs, such as aligning best practices and curriculum across grade levels · No strategy pertaining to work environment or compensation · Recommends raising wages by increasing base salaries and/or wage supplement programs
OR	Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Learning System Plan 2019 -2023 (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by increasing access via scholarships and ensuring diversity · Recommends improving work environments by incorporating professional supports (e.g., paid planning time, paid professional development time, compensation, wellness, and health benefits) into program standards · Recommends creating compensation requirements that align with kindergarten educator compensation across publicly funded ECE programs and increase public investment to implement those requirements
RI	Rhode Island Early Learning Council Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020 (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports teacher preparation by increasing access to higher ed via TEACH, articulation agreements and content of coursework (dual language, infant-toddler) · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Recommends improving compensation through a minimum living wage for entry level professionals and close the gap in wages between community-based and public school educators; recommends increasing reimbursement rates and using wage supplements
VT	Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Recommends improving teacher preparation through ensuring course sequencing and consistency across institutions regarding credits accepted Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge [RTT-ELC]; enhancing alignment in curriculum for all HEs in the state; and implementing TEACH · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Compensation: focuses on establishing baseline wages across ECE and wage supplements (WAGE\$, tax credits)
VA	Implementation Plan for Competency-Based Career Pathways (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supports strengthening career pathways and compensation through establishing a common set of quality standards for competencies at different levels, including suggested compensation levels at identified competencies, and assessed via a certification/credential process · No strategy pertaining to work environments · Came out of the Transforming the Workforce implementation project; clear timeline and appears to be in the final stages of development now
WA	Report to the Washington State Legislature: Compensation Technical Workgroup (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Endorses Transforming Financing principle that workforce should not bear costs of teacher preparation · Recommends improving work environments by ensuring educators receive 10 days of paid time off/year and programs have access to paid substitute coverage from state's substitute pool · Recommends EC educators receive a competitive compensation package comparable to K-3 educators through salary scales, wage increases, retirement contributions, and medical benefits · Includes ECE teacher/provider input as well as cost model

Recent Action to Advance Workforce Goals

Using CSCCE's existing tracking of workforce legislation and initiatives for the purposes of the *Early Childhood Workforce Index* as well as an updated scan of the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) legislative tracker, we identified states with recent legislation to alter the preparation, support, and compensation of the ECE workforce as well as related issues (e.g., allowing collective bargaining). Over half of the states passed legislation in the past few years pertaining to these issues in some capacity, and a few additional states introduced legislation that was still pending at the time of our scan. Particularly notable examples include:

- In Connecticut, legislation was passed requiring the Office of Early Childhood to develop a plan and cost estimate for a statewide early childhood educator compensation schedule.
- In Illinois, legislation was passed to provide Early Childhood Workforce Free College grants to all eligible child care workers seeking an associate or bachelor's degree from a public institution or a regionally accredited, online-only early childhood education degree program. The legislation also established an Early Childhood Workforce Advisory Committee to analyze the program and advise on ways to improve access and expand the ECE workforce in the state.

Other recent action by states has been clearly spurred by national efforts. We know from CSCCE's survey of states for the *Early Childhood Workforce Index* that some states used federal grant funding from the previous Preschool Development Grants (PDGs) and the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants to support their workforce efforts, particularly the RTT-ELC grants. However, given the limited time period of the funds, they were typically used for short-term activities such as workforce studies, scholarships, and stipends for teachers. Massachusetts and North Carolina notably used the funds to make improvements to their higher education offerings, focusing on leadership development and Master's-level programs.

Several states have been participating in cohort projects and workgroups led by national organizations such as the National Governors' Association/Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Alliance for Early Success. Typically these projects fund teams of state stakeholders to learn about ways to improve their state's policies practices, and advocacy pertaining to the workforce and to develop action plans. 30 states have participated in at least one of the efforts we identified, while a handful of states have participated in four or more such efforts (Iowa, Minnesota, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin).

Data Gaps and Areas for Further Study

This research used publicly available data and documents as well as partner databases (e.g., CSCCE's *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, NIEER's *State of Preschool Yearbooks*) compiled for the purposes of other research, where appropriate. Accordingly, these findings are limited to existing knowledge and additional data sources that are available online, and does not include idiosyncratic or less formal information about all states.

At the level of 50-state data, there are significant gaps in our understanding of the policies and conditions affecting the ECE workforce. In particular, information on higher education policies, practices, and infrastructure was particularly challenging to identify across all 50 states, as detailed in the analysis of ECE educator preparation, see *Early Educator Preparation Landscape*.

While challenges collecting information were partly due to the nature of collecting data across states with different policy contexts, there are additional challenges due to the fragmented nature of ECE in every state, illustrated by our efforts to understand the financial context of ECE and the status of the ECE workforce across the states.

Data on Financial Context of ECE

Sound data on the financial context of ECE in general, as well as funds spent on the workforce specifically, is difficult to find or compile. Data, where it exists, on how much is spent, on whom, and for what, is fragmented by funding stream/agency and in some cases cannot be disentangled, particularly at the state level.

Core ECE funding streams and programs such as the federal Head Start/Early Head Start program, the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and state pre-kindergarten programs are frequently overseen by separate agencies within a state, though some states have moved toward integration. A recent report by the Bipartisan Policy Center has compiled the most comprehensive overview of the structure of state agencies and spending per funding stream per state, but even this source was unable to report detailed information on the number of children and programs participating for all funding streams in all states, much less information on the workforce delivering these services.⁴⁴ The vast majority of states are unable to produce unduplicated counts of children served by programs, or to report funding by the ages of children, even though we know that disparities exist by the age of child and that these disparities are similarly reflected in the workforce which is also segmented by the ages of the children they work with.

NIEER's State of Preschool Yearbooks regularly report the per-child amount of pre-K funding per program in a state, which is a good indicator of how much states are willing to invest in ECE services for children just below school age but does not necessarily indicate willingness to invest in services for 0-5 more broadly, and may not reflect all public sources of funding for pre-k in a state (such as independent local or district initiatives that are not part of a state pre-k program). Other sources, such as reports from the National Women's Law Center,⁴⁵ provide information on state policies

⁴⁴ Bipartisan Policy Center. (December 2018) "Creating an Integrated Efficient Early Care and Education System to Support Children and Families: A State-By-State Analysis." Early Childhood Initiative. Washington, D.C.: Bipartisan Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Creating-an-Integrated-Efficient-Early-Care-and-Education-System-to-Support-Children-and-Families-A-State-by-State-Analysis.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Schulman, Karen (October 2018). "Overdue for Investment: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2018." Washington, D.C.: National Women's Law Center. Retrieved from <https://nwlc->

related to child care subsidies like variation in eligibility rules and reimbursement rates that affect families' access to care. However, the bigger challenge is the instability and inadequacy of child care funding, across all states.

Perhaps more meaningful would be an understanding of the extent to which states are aware of the insufficiency of current levels of public funding and their efforts to address the issue. We were able to compile some information on states and localities with distinct revenue streams that can be used for ECE services, but in many cases these funds are not solely for the purpose of delivering ECE, but may be used for children's health and other services. At the 50-state level we were not able to do sufficient research to understand how these funds are used for ECE, including whether and to what extent they are being used to fund workforce initiatives.

We also had some limited information on whether or not states are engaging in cost modeling efforts, which is an important first step in securing sufficient funding for services. State representatives surveyed for CSCCE's 2018 *Early Childhood Workforce Index* were asked whether their state has utilized an existing cost-estimation tool (e.g., the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator) and/or had developed their own cost study. Many states indicated that they had employed some approach to calculating cost, but many existing modeling tools do not apply equitable compensation assumptions for early educators. We were not consistently able to identify the extent to which the approaches states identified were used to assess the cost to deliver a truly equitable and high-quality system, including appropriate preparation, support, and compensation for early educators,⁴⁶ or for some other purpose (e.g., expanding existing services to a targeted population, braiding existing funding streams to create efficiencies).

Data on the ECE Workforce and Workforce-Specific Initiatives

Data on the ECE workforce itself can be similarly fragmented.⁴⁷ Accurate, up-to-date, ongoing data on the number of early educators, their level of education, wages/salaries, their access to benefits like health insurance, and how these variables differ by job role, 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 establish a baseline from which to measure policy goals and to budget how much funding would be needed to achieve those goals. Data can also be used to support the case for improved workforce policies and practices. For example, recent implementation of parity policies for pre-K teachers in several states was bolstered by the ability to

ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2018.pdf.

⁴⁶ Gould, E., Whitebook, M., Mokhiber, Z., and Austin, L J.E. (2019). *Breaking the Silence on Early Care and Education Costs: A Values-Based Budget for Children, Parents, and Teachers in California*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

⁴⁷ Whitebook et al. (2018a).

demonstrate high turnover and the inability to retain teachers in lower-paid community-based settings.⁴⁸

Shortcomings persist in our efforts to collect ECE workforce data at both the national and state levels. There is no comprehensive, longitudinal data source for tracking the early childhood workforce in its entirety across the United States. Occupational data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics cannot be disaggregated by certain roles or settings, and federal administrative agencies, such as the Office of Head Start, only collect data on teaching staff who work in those programs. The 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) provided some much-needed detail on the ECE workforce and is due to be repeated in 2019, but this resource remains limited in the extent to which it can be used to understand state and local variation.

There are similar challenges in using data collected by the states. Administrative data sets vary based on the settings in which early educators work and the agency responsible (Head Start, pre-K, child care licensing). Some states, such as Maryland and Rhode Island, have been linking workforce data from a variety of administrative sources, but administrative data do not necessarily capture all providers if they do not receive state funding or are not licensed. Nearly all states have developed workforce registries, though these vary widely in who participates and the quality of the data collected. More than half (27) of the states have published workforce survey reports at some point within the past five years (2013-2018), the majority of which (17) were conducted since 2016. Several states (California and Rhode Island) are currently in the middle of conducting new surveys.

Yet, even with this expansion of state-level registries and surveys, few states currently have the ability to estimate the total number of early educators in their state, and those that are able to report an estimate may not have a good-quality estimate, depending on how it was developed. For example, states with registries may be able to report total participants, but the data could include inactive participants or may only include those who voluntarily choose to participate, making any findings potentially unrepresentative of the wider workforce.

The type of data that states collect about the workforce is similarly crucial. For example, without knowledge of the educational distribution of the workforce across settings and by demographic characteristics, it is nearly impossible to estimate the proportion of the incumbent workforce that might need to pursue more education in response to new degree requirements or to assess the distance between current levels of educational attainment and degree completion. Without these data, stakeholders lack the ability to gauge the capacity of higher education institutions to respond to demand. Furthermore, it is impossible to appropriately craft and sufficiently fund policies to ensure equitable access to opportunities for advancement among those from historic minority communities currently underrepresented or overrepresented in various educator roles. Yet, in the majority of states and communities and across all segments of the workforce, such questions cannot be fully answered. In some states there is a reluctance or even prohibition against the collection of race and ethnicity data on the workforce. Data on teacher work environments, which are increasingly

⁴⁸ McLean, C., Dichter, H., & Whitebook, M. (2017). *Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons From Seven States and Cities*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley and New Brunswick, NJ: the National Institute for Early Education Research.

understood to be linked to the quality of children’s learning environments, are particularly scarce. CSCCE’s SEQUAL studies, conducted in a handful of states and counties, demonstrate the need for this information on a wider scale.⁴⁹

Although states have made great progress toward better workforce data collection, they have been doing so largely on a state-by-state basis, limiting comparability of data across states and making it difficult for researchers and other stakeholders to understand differences in workforce characteristics and opportunities not only within states, but across states. The National Workforce Registry Alliance has played an instrumental role in coordinating data collection among its member states with ECE workforce registries and, in recent years, has built a cross-state data set. Greater coordination of workforce data — including both registries and surveys — at the federal or cross-state level would help ensure that data on the workforce collected in Illinois, North Carolina, California, or any other state can be compared, which is crucial for understanding how effective state policies have been in improving the preparation, support, and compensation of early educators.

At the 50-state level we are able to assess the availability and to some degree the quality of each state’s workforce data, drawing heavily on assessments of state’s workforce registries and recent workforce studies CSCCE conducted for the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*. This is a strong starting point for understanding whether a state will have data that can support advocacy and action planning related to better preparation, support, and compensation for early educators. In addition, we assessed whether states are able to report key data on their pre-K workforce (qualifications, salaries);⁵⁰ whether they have integrated administrative data systems and also link their workforce data;⁵¹ as well as whether it is possible to use the 2012 NSECE survey to gain state-level workforce estimates in key areas.

Among these data sources, about half of states have data that could potentially be used for planning purposes related to workforce policies, and about 5 states (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Oregon) rise to the top for also having data that can be used to give some sense of changes in workforce characteristics over time. Illinois in particular appears to be a leader with regard to workforce data, due to the strength of its workforce registry as well as its supplemental workforce surveys, conducted every two years. Yet even in Illinois, there are important, basic questions about the ECE workforce that cannot currently be answered. As illustrated in their recent report from their registry,⁵² they are unable to identify their center-based pre-K teachers at the teacher level.

⁴⁹ See Teachers’ Voices: Reflections on Working Conditions that Impact Practice and Program Quality (SEQUAL). Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/teacher-work-environments/sequal/teachers-voices/>.

⁵⁰ Friedman-Krauss et al. (2019).

⁵¹ King, C., Perkins, V., Nugent, C., and Jordan, E. (September 2018). “2018 State of State Early Childhood Data Systems.” The Early Childhood Data Collaborative. Retrieved from: <https://www.ecedata.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ECDC-50-state-survey-9.25.pdf>.

⁵² Whitehead, J. (2018). Illinois’ Early Childhood Workforce 2017 Report. Bloomington, IL: INCCRRA. Retrieved from: https://www.inccrra.org/images/datareports/DR3217_FullReport2.pdf.

The ECE workforce data deficit has led to an ECE workforce research deficit.⁵³ Efforts to improve early educator preparation, support, and compensation typically have not been systematically evaluated in order to assess their effectiveness or to understand what improvements would enhance their effectiveness. Better data on the workforce, particularly built in as a component of workforce initiatives, would make it easier to study these initiatives and confirm likely effects in terms of improved recruitment and retention.

Appendix A: 50-State Indicators and Data Sources

State Indicators	Data Sources
State ECE guidelines, policies, and requirements	
Competencies	
Do competencies exist for ECE per state and how do they vary by job role?	CCDF state plans, state websites
Are above competencies specialized by age of child?	CCDF state plans, state websites
Are above competencies aligned to national standards?	NAEYC, CDA, Division for Early Childhood (DEC), and Head Start
Are above competencies aligned to QRIS?	CCDF state plans, state websites
Are above competencies aligned to career pathways?	CCDF state plans, state websites
Are above competencies aligned to higher education teacher training curriculum, a state credential, or CDA?	CCDF state plans, state websites
Licensing/Certification/Credentialing Policies	
Child care program licensing requirements (minimum qualifications)	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data)
Additional ECE 0-5 specific certification/credentialing	CCDF state plans, state websites

⁵³ Whitebook, M., McLean, C., and Austin, L.J.E. (2018c). *The Workforce Data Deficit: Who it Harms and How it Can Be Overcome*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

Pre-K specific certification/licensure	2018 NIEER Yearbook
0-8 or ECE thru K-3 certification/licensure	State websites
State agencies and governance structures responsible for regulating teacher certification, licensure, and preparation program approval	State websites
Ongoing/Continuing Education and Professional Development	
Ongoing/continuing education and professional development required for early educators (coaching, mentoring)	2018 NIEER Yearbook
Ongoing/continuing education and professional development required for K-3 teachers	State DOE websites
IHE Policies and Access	
State articulation agreements	CCDF state plans
State has a scholarship (including but not limited to TEACH) for bachelor degrees, associate degrees, and/or CDAs (or their equivalent) for ECE teachers	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index; 2018 NIEER Yearbook
State has a loan forgiveness program for K-12 teachers	2016 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data)
State has a loan forgiveness program for ECE teachers, or includes ECE teachers in K-12 program	2016 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data)
Work Environment Standards	
Incorporation of working environment standards (e.g., paid time for professional responsibilities) in quality frameworks	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index
Compensation Policies/Guidelines	
Parity policies for pre-K	2018 NIEER Yearbook
State has articulated compensation standards or guidelines for programs outside of publicly funded pre-K	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index
State funding dedicated to compensation outside of publicly funded pre-K	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index
State has initiatives for benefits outside of publicly funded pre-K	CCDF state plans

Compensation Levels	
Wage/salaries of ECE and K-3 professionals and disparities within ECE	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index; 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (restricted state data - not available for all states); PIR (Head Start); 2018 NIEER Yearbook
ECE Programs and Financing	
Range of ECE programs, including: child care, Head Start, public pre-Kindergarten, mandated/full-day kindergarten, family child care, informal care, and others	2018 NIEER Yearbook; PIR, Census, IDEA part C APRs, CCDF, PDG B-5 proposals, NSECE, DOE websites (for Kindergarten)
Child access to above programs, including disparities in access based on child and family characteristics	2018 NIEER Yearbook; PIR; Census; America's Child Care Deserts, 2018; Early Learning in the United States: 2018
Federal and state funding streams available to support the ECE workforce, including (but not limited to): CCDBG/TANF, ESEA, tax levies, WIOA, Higher Education Act (Titles II and IV), and meeting state matching requirements for federal funding	2018 NIEER Yearbook; Federal funding websites (OHS) Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update
Advocacy Work to Advance Policy	
The presence of recent administrative policies and/or legislation to advance ECE/ECE workforce	
Recent admin policies/legislation to advance ECE (non-pre-K)	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data); NCSL Legislation Tracker
Recent admin policies/legislation to advance pre-K	2018 NIEER Yearbook/Essential Elements scans
Efforts to spur awareness/action on ECE issues, particularly as it relates to the workforce	
State plans	CCDF state plans, PDG B-5 applications, other state plans identified from state websites
Governors talking about ECE workforce	NIEER Essential Elements scan (2018); State of the State Address via Education Drive; Center for American Progress - Newly Elected Governors Support Expanding Early Childhood Programs
Momentum for policy change	
Political and administrative leadership, recent leadership changes, and influential city/district leadership	

Current political and administrative leadership	State websites
Recent leadership changes	State websites
Influential city/district leadership	State websites
Recent policy, advocacy, or organizing action	
Recent policy, advocacy, or organizing action	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data); 2018 NIEER Yearbook; NCSL database
New public funding for ECE	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data); 2018 NIEER Yearbook
Participation in nationally funded initiatives (PDG and other federal grants, NGA ECE Workforce and other relevant state cohort projects)	2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index (unpublished data); Early Childhood Funders Collaborative
Demographics of children	
0-8 Child Population Total	U.S. Census Population Estimates, Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017
State 0-8 Child Population As Percent Of U.S. 0-8 Child Population	
Percent Of Children In Low-income Families That Received Child Care Subsidies	Center for American Progress, Early Learning in the United States: 2018
Percent Of Children Who Live In a Child Care Desert	Center for American Progress, America's Child Care Deserts, 2018
Percent Of Children Under 5 Years Old Living In Poverty	U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Percent Of Children (0-8): White, Not Hispanic	U.S. Census Population Estimates, Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017
Percent Of Children Age 5 To 8 Where a Language Other Than English Is Spoken At Home	U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Percent Of Children Who Are Foreign-born (0-8)	U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Demographics of the ECE workforce	
Center-based Workforce Population Total	2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (Restricted State Data - not available for all states)
State Center-based Workforce Population as Percent of U.S. Center-based Workforce Population	

Percent of Center-based Workforce: White/non-Hispanic	
Home-based (Listed) Workforce Population Total	
State Home-based (Listed) Workforce Population as Percent of U.S. Home-based Listed Workforce Population	
Child Care Worker Family Participation Rates in Public Income Support Programs	Early Childhood Workforce Index - 2018 (not available for all states)
Local funders focused on the ECE workforce	
Investments (past or current) in ECE workforce initiatives by EEIC Steering Committee members	Early Childhood Funders Collaborative
Other state or local funders engaged in ECE workforce initiatives	Early Childhood Funders Collaborative



Center for the Study of
Child Care Employment

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment conducts research and proposes policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation prepares, supports, and rewards the early care and education workforce since 1999.

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Bellwether Education Partners is a national nonprofit focused on dramatically changing education and life outcomes for underserved children. We do this by helping education organizations accelerate their impact and by working to improve policy and practice. Bellwether envisions a world in which race, ethnicity, and income no longer predict opportunities for students, and the American education system affords all individuals the ability to determine their own path and lead a productive and fulfilling life.

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The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) conducts academic research to inform policy supporting high-quality, early education for all young children, promoting the physical, cognitive, and social development children need to succeed in school and later life. NIEER provides independent, research-based analysis and technical assistance to policymakers, journalists, researchers, and educators.

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