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# Educator Expectations, Qualifications, and Earnings: Shared Challenges and Divergent Systems in ECE and K-12

By Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D. and Caitlin McLean, Ph.D.

**Project Description:** This policy brief builds on a previous report, [Building a Skilled Teacher Workforce: Shared and Divergent Challenges in Early Care and Education and in Grades K-12](#), which was released in 2014. This brief focuses in depth on two specific aspects of personnel systems – educator qualification requirements and earnings – and includes new assessments based on updated data. Accompanying the brief is a chart, [Comparison of Personnel Systems for K-12 and Early Childhood Teachers: Qualifications and Compensation](#), which provides an overview of the characteristics of teachers in K-12 and ECE.

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**Summary:** Conversations about how to prepare, support, and reward teachers reveal both shared and divergent challenges in K-12 compared with early care and education (ECE), due to very different assumptions about the purpose of these services and who is responsible for providing, funding, and governing them. Variations in personnel systems accompany these differences in service delivery and funding responsibility. In particular, low and inconsistent educational requirements for early educators send the inaccurate and harmful message that early learning is less important and requires less skill compared with teaching older children, contributing to low investment in early care and education compared with K-12, and consequently, poor working conditions for many early educators.

## Key Findings:

- While there is wide consensus across states and types of schools (public, charter, and private) that K-12 teachers should obtain at least a bachelor's degree, no consensus exists in ECE, and as a result, vast disparities exist in minimum qualifications and teacher educational attainment by ECE setting and across states.
- While expectations – but not necessarily formal qualification requirements – for early educators have risen, compensation remains much more generous for K-12 teachers compared with ECE teachers, contributing to economic insecurity and turnover within the early care and education field.



# Introduction

In both early care and education (ECE) and K-12, discussions are underway about how to recruit and retain skilled teachers. In ECE, these conversations sit within broader discussions about raising the quality of child care services and expanding access to high-quality, state-funded pre-K. In K-12, similar dialogues can be found amid concerns about a growing teacher shortage.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly, educators across the age spectrum understand their importance to one another: high-quality ECE services can support children's development and readiness for school entry as well as contribute to building the skills students need throughout K-12 and beyond. As these two historically divergent systems come into more contact and early education is increasingly understood to be central to educational reform, there are both greater needs and more opportunities for stakeholders in ECE and K-12 to come together to align policies and practices to support teachers in providing high-quality learning experiences for children of all ages.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, it is becoming ever more important to understand existing differences in ECE and K-12 systems, especially as they relate to personnel and the reforms needed to address persistent disparities. This brief can be viewed as a cultural exchange of sorts, intended to clarify misconceptions and bridge gaps necessary for generating effective reform and policy.

Much of this discussion expands on an earlier report, *Building a Skilled Teacher Workforce: Shared and Divergent Challenges in Early Care and Education and in Grades K-12*,<sup>3</sup> which provided a comprehensive examination of multiple aspects of ECE and K-12 teaching conditions and personnel systems, including teacher preparation, career pathways, leadership, and work environments, among others. This brief focuses in depth on two specific aspects of personnel systems – educator qualification requirements and earnings – and includes new assessments based on updated data, some of which are drawn from the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*.<sup>4</sup> Each section provides an overview of the current state of affairs for both ECE<sup>5</sup> and K-12 as well as a discussion of the differences in educator expectations and earnings, exploring the implications for the teachers themselves and for the children they serve.

Accompanying the brief is a chart, [Comparison of Personnel Systems for K-12 and Early Childhood Teachers: Qualifications and Compensation](#), which provides an overview of the characteristics of teachers in K-12 and ECE, including demographics, educational attainment, and earnings, as well as qualification requirements and unionization rates, in order to provide context.

## Educator Expectations and Qualification Requirements

The science of child development suggests a continuum of early learning from birth to age eight.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this new evidence, there is increased recognition that the early years are critical for success in school and beyond and that teachers are at the heart of good learning environments for children of any age.<sup>7</sup> Greater understanding of the importance of the early years and the critical role that early educators play in facilitating learning and development has increased the day-to-day expectations of ECE teachers. These expectations are reflected in quality improvement strategies, such as the development of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)<sup>8</sup> in many states, and the use of program assessments, such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).<sup>9</sup> Yet these increased expectations are not currently reflected in formal qualification requirements for ECE teachers and, therefore, are not reflected in current

systems of preparation to enter the field. While a few systems treat preschool teachers as part of the teaching workforce, the persistently low qualifications that have been set for most educators working with children birth to age five perpetuates the notion that teaching in early education is low-skilled work.

Recognizing the disconnect between the science of early development and policy/practice, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council of the National Academies assert in their 2015 report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*,<sup>10</sup> that increased coherence in qualification requirements, such as those for credentialing and licensure, would improve the consistency, continuity, and quality of learning experiences for children from birth through age eight. The report urges government agencies and nongovernmental organizations at local, state, and federal levels to engage in a mutual review process aimed at ensuring that all requirements are based on “foundational knowledge and competencies necessary across professional roles.”

Furthermore, based on a comprehensive review of the science of child development and early learning, the report asserts that lead educators working with infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early elementary grades require equivalent levels of knowledge and competencies and should be on “equal footing in their preparation for practice.” In recognition of the aspirational nature of such a goal, the authors call for transitioning to a minimum bachelor’s degree with specialized knowledge and competencies for all lead teachers of children from birth through age eight. The report also acknowledges that various roles (e.g., assistant teacher, teacher, and administrator) in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, centers, homes) currently have different expectations and requirements. Accordingly, the report emphasizes the importance of establishing structures that delineate a career pathway from entry to leadership roles. This career pathway should include opportunities for all early educators to access foundational skills and knowledge, whether via higher education or entry-level training that articulates into higher education.

For the education of children age five and older, there is wide consensus across states and types of schools (public, charter, and private) that teachers should obtain at least a bachelor’s degree. As a result, 96 percent of public school teachers hold at least a bachelor’s degree, and 56 percent hold at least a master’s degree, according to the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).<sup>11</sup> In public schools, teachers are also required to obtain provisional certification before they begin teaching.<sup>12</sup>

By contrast, no uniform educational floor exists across the ECE field for working with children age four and younger. The federal Head Start<sup>13</sup> and Military Child Care programs set uniform national requirements for teachers and other personnel funded by those programs, but in other ECE settings, which may or may not be supported by other types of federal and state funds, varying expectations for education and training are in place: each of the 50 states (as well as the District of Columbia and U.S. territories) sets its own qualifications and certification for ECE teachers, assistant teachers, and directors in licensed early childhood programs, often with different standards depending on the type of setting.

All but one state has established a set of core knowledge and competencies, identifying what early educators — from novice to expert — should know and be able to do.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the creation of these core competencies has not translated into consensus about the minimum education requirements for teachers working with children prior to kindergarten, and it is rare for these teachers to be individually certified, except in public pre-K programs, where certification is more likely to be required.<sup>15</sup>

Today, no states have qualification systems in line with the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council recommendation for equivalent lead-teacher qualifications across settings for all children birth to age eight. In most ECE settings, state licensing standards set the basic level of health and safety

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requirements for ECE facilities and the educational qualifications for teaching and administrative staff. Only 10 states require at least a Child Development Associate™ credential (CDA)<sup>16</sup> or completion of a substantive vocational program for center-based lead teachers. Most states require only a high school diploma or some training hours. Ten states have no minimum requirements for center-based lead teachers.<sup>17</sup>

Qualifications above what licensing requires across different types of ECE settings reflect the historically varying purposes of ECE programs: those that were conceived primarily as support services for working parents (e.g., child care) generally set lower qualification requirements than those designed as early education (such as preschools and public pre-K programs). For example, publicly funded pre-K programs serving children age three and four are usually viewed as early education and are therefore structured accordingly, typically operating out of or otherwise overseen by school districts with governance placed under state departments of education rather than health and human services, as with services viewed as “child care only.” Consequently, pre-K programs are increasingly requiring a minimum of a bachelor’s degree for lead teachers. Of the 43 states plus the District of Columbia that offer public pre-K programs, little more than half (23) require a minimum of a bachelor’s degree for all lead teachers, regardless of setting.<sup>18</sup> An additional 14 states require a bachelor’s for some pre-K teachers in certain types of programs or settings, most often pre-K teachers located in public schools only.<sup>19</sup> The remaining seven states do not require a bachelor’s degree for any pre-K teachers.

In part due to raised standards for minimum qualifications in state-funded pre-K and the federal Head Start program, as well as financial supports<sup>20</sup> for the early care and education workforce to meet those requirements, the educational attainment of early educators in certain settings has increased over time.<sup>21</sup> The most recent national data on the ECE workforce demonstrates that more than one-third of teaching staff in centers hold at least a bachelor’s degree.<sup>22</sup> For lead teachers only, the percentage with at least a bachelor’s degree increases to 43 percent.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, again reflecting differences in minimum requirements, a bachelor’s degree or higher is much more common among early educators working with children age three to five (45 percent) than among those working with children under age three (19 percent).<sup>24</sup> Teachers in Head Start or those working in state-funded pre-K programs are more likely to hold a bachelor’s degree than those working in other facilities (see accompanying chart, [Comparison of Personnel Systems for K-12 and Early Childhood Teachers: Qualifications and Compensation](#)).

## Implications of Differences in Expectations and Qualifications for Teacher Preparation and Children’s Access to Services

Different standards for K-12 and ECE teacher qualifications drive differences in career pathways and professional preparation and development infrastructures. In K-12, “teacher preparation” refers not only to pre-service education and licensure, which are typically required before employment, but also to fieldwork and student teaching experiences.<sup>25</sup> New teachers typically benefit from induction or mentoring programs as well as required ongoing professional development as they become more experienced. Public dollars are earmarked for induction and other forms of continuing teacher education.

In contrast, many ECE teachers do not participate in pre-service education. In response to rising educational requirements in such programs as Head Start and publicly funded pre-K, ECE teachers are increasingly attending college or university programs to complete required credits or to earn degrees while employed.<sup>26</sup> Many ECE teachers’ first teaching jobs typically double as their “practice teaching” but rarely with the formal structure of supervision common in K-12.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, many ECE work settings do not establish a continuing education requirement for teachers.

Additionally, K-12 teachers are required to complete a course of study that covers subject matter content (such as mathematics, literacy, or science) and pedagogical strategies aligned with state certification requirements. In ECE, historically, any course of study within one of several disciplines focused on children

of any age has been considered an acceptable form of teacher preparation.<sup>28</sup> Some degrees may not include coursework or student teaching with children younger than five or address pedagogical strategies. While efforts to expand accreditation of early childhood higher education programs are underway, there is not yet a widely accepted and agreed-upon standard for what constitutes a high-quality program of study for ECE practitioners.<sup>29</sup>

This variation in educational requirements and preparation for teachers of young children results in great inequities for children. For example, in different states – or sometimes even within the same state – four-year-olds who are eligible to attend a publicly subsidized ECE program may be taught by someone with the equivalent of a master’s degree or by a teacher with no college background at all. In any state, the qualifications that a child can expect her ECE teacher to meet are dependent not on her individual developmental and educational needs, but rather on the type of programs that are available and affordable given her family’s circumstances. Yet access to teachers who are equally well prepared is critical for *all* children, regardless of where they receive early learning services.

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## Educator Earnings: Pay and Benefits

While expectations – but not necessarily formal qualification requirements – for early educators have risen, compensation (including all forms of pay and benefits, as well as paid professional time for planning and training) remains much less generous for ECE teachers compared with K-12 teachers. Kindergarten and elementary school teacher earnings exceed median earnings in every state (but not the District of Columbia), yet it is exceedingly rare for ECE teacher earnings to reach these levels. Preschool teacher earnings exceed median earnings in only three states and by a considerably lower margin compared with kindergarten and elementary school teachers.<sup>30</sup> ECE teachers classified as “child care workers” by the Bureau of Labor Statistics earn even less.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, many ECE teachers are paid lower salaries, despite working for longer periods throughout the year. K-12 teachers typically work a 10-month year. While ECE teachers in state-funded pre-K and Head Start programs often work a 10-month year, teachers in most other ECE center-based programs work a 12-month year and are predominantly full-time workers.<sup>32</sup>

In K-12, uniform pay scales that link compensation to years of experience and professional development are established by local public school districts. In ECE, pay varies dramatically within and across sectors, and formal pay scales are uncommon.<sup>33</sup>

While K-12 teacher compensation is lower than many believe appropriate or necessary in order to attract and retain highly effective personnel,<sup>34</sup> K-12 teaching can provide a relatively “family-sustainable” income in most communities. Many ECE teachers, on the other hand, earn wages hovering near the poverty level, and they rely on public income supports (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, SNAP/food stamps, or Medicaid) to provide for themselves and their families.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, many of the ECE teachers who have returned to school and obtained bachelor’s degrees, as required by Head Start and some public pre-K programs, fail to garner a reasonable return on their educational investment, even if they earn slightly more than their less-educated colleagues (see accompanying chart, [Comparison of Personnel Systems for K-12 and Early Childhood Teachers: Qualifications and Compensation](#)).

The most progress in securing higher pay for early educators has been in state-funded pre-K programs. Some states have explicit requirements to pay pre-K teachers salaries comparable to K-12 teachers, while other states have no explicit salary guidelines and, therefore, pre-K teachers could be making considerably less than teachers working with older children in the classroom next door. Even where salary requirements are in place, they are not necessarily equitable. For example, some states set salary requirements only for pre-K teachers working in public schools but not community-based settings.<sup>36</sup>

Disparities in benefits and paid professional time tend to go hand in hand with disparities in pay. Working conditions in K-12 routinely include payment for personal leave (vacation, holidays, sick leave) and time for planning, professional development, and sharing with colleagues. Employer-offered health and retirement benefits are included in pay packages provided to the vast majority of public school teachers.<sup>37</sup> Such benefits are less common for ECE teachers. Like standards for teacher qualifications and opportunities for professional development, working conditions for teachers of younger children vary by setting and by funding stream, with publicly funded pre-K and Head Start typically offering better benefits and support. 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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

Wage and benefit differences in ECE and K-12 are largely driven by differences in the structure and financing of the two systems.<sup>41</sup> In terms of structure, K-12 teachers tend to work in schools with a high number of personnel compared with the small organizations prevalent in ECE, where approximately half of programs employ eight or fewer teaching staff.<sup>42</sup> Larger organizations benefit from cost-sharing mechanisms and are better able to negotiate lower rates for staff benefits.

Additionally, because ECE staff are spread out over a large number of small organizations, there is less opportunity for collective representation on the job. 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.<sup>43</sup> 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: 10 percent for all center-based teaching staff.<sup>44</sup> ECE teachers in school-sponsored settings only make up about 6 percent of the workforce,<sup>45</sup> and the vast majority of ECE teachers are not members of unions or other professional organizations. As such, an organized teacher voice is absent from the majority of ECE workplaces as well as at forums where public policy decisions are made.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps in part because of a lack of ECE teacher voice in policy decision-making, ECE has yet to garner the same public investment as education for older children, and a lack of sustained public funding for ECE contributes to the lower wages in the field. In contrast to K-12, the majority of ECE services, including centers that receive public dollars, operate in private-market settings as commercial or nonprofit enterprises,<sup>47</sup> and the majority of families are directly responsible for covering the costs associated with their children's participation.<sup>48</sup> As a result, ECE providers are faced with the difficult task of trying to provide a high-cost service at prices parents can afford, and teacher wages tend to bear the brunt of this dilemma.

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# Implications of Low Earnings for Well-Being, Recruitment, and Retention

There is concern that low earnings for teachers across the age spectrum pose difficulties for recruitment and retention, yet the magnitude is far greater for ECE compared with K-12, as employment in early care and education has largely failed to generate sufficient wages that would allow early educators to meet their basic needs. Poor compensation thus poses a risk to the well-being of early educators, with consequences extending to their own families and also to the children entrusted to their care.<sup>49</sup> According to the National Academies of Science, adversity and stress may affect educators' capacity to support the learning and behavioral growth of young children, especially those who are in greatest need of sensitive and responsive care.

Low compensation also drives turnover in the field. While compensation plays some role in K-12 teacher churn,<sup>50</sup> there is mounting evidence that poor compensation and associated working conditions undermine efforts to improve quality and attract and retain skilled educators in the ECE field.<sup>51</sup> ECE teachers with bachelor's degrees often seek the higher pay offered in school-sponsored pre-K settings, causing them to leave Head Start and other ECE jobs. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of teaching staff who left Head Start programs in 2015–16 did so, according to program leaders, because they were seeking a "higher compensation/benefits package in the same field (e.g., teacher left to school system)."<sup>52</sup> Even small variations in wages drive turnover, as early educators understandably seek alternative employment opportunities that enable them to improve their financial situations, if only marginally. Similar churning occurs in pre-K programs that pay lower salaries than K-12, as teachers leave for kindergarten and early elementary teaching positions.<sup>53</sup>

Even when early educators remain within the teaching profession but leave one site for another, this turnover poses challenges to providing the continuity of relationships so essential to young children's optimal development and to improving program quality.<sup>54</sup> Churning also comes at a cost to the staff who remain, in terms of being overworked, and at an exorbitant financial cost to recruit and train new staff. Estimates of the annual cost of turnover in K-12 education range from \$1 billion to \$2.2 billion, depending on the type of district.<sup>55</sup> No recent calculations of turnover costs in ECE are available, but given the high rate of turnover in settings for young children,<sup>56</sup> even when accounting for likely lower administrative costs, it is safe to assume that many thousands of dollars are spent per program each year that could be better used to cover higher wages or fund professional development opportunities.

## Conclusion

Conversations about how to prepare, support, and reward teachers reveal both shared and divergent challenges in K-12 and ECE, largely due to very different assumptions about the purpose of these services, their clientele, and who is responsible for providing, funding, and governing them. The provision of free schooling for all children in grades K-12 throughout the nation has long been recognized as a public good that contributes to many economic and social benefits. Nonetheless, in contrast to many other developed countries,<sup>57</sup> U.S. society has yet to fully recognize ECE as an educational endeavor or embrace it as a public good, as with K-12 education. With the exception of services provided for families in the armed services and a handful of state or local entities that have written schooling for four-year-olds into law, children have no guarantee of publicly funded ECE services before they enter kindergarten or first grade, and the majority of families are directly responsible for covering the costs associated with their children's participation.



Variations in personnel systems, particularly for those who work with children before and after kindergarten entry, accompany these differences in service delivery and funding responsibility. In particular, low and inconsistent educational requirements for early educators send the inaccurate and harmful message that early learning is less important and requires less skill compared with teaching older children, contributing to low investment in early care and education compared with K-12, and consequently, poor working conditions for many early educators.

K-12 and ECE share the challenge of providing supportive work environments to sustain effective teaching, but their divergent systems – in terms of the structure and financing of service provision and the status of the work – pose distinct barriers to meeting that challenge. Policies governing the two systems can play a role in bringing these two worlds together and elevating the status of early care and education. The K-12 community can serve as a powerful ally by embracing the benefits of high-quality ECE, understanding its challenges under the current system, and helping to elevate the status of this complex work and the skilled teachers needed to perform it. Together, the ECE and K-12 communities can work to secure adequate work environments, pay, and supports, such as time for collaborative and reflective practice and affordable preparation for all teachers. Ensuring that all teachers are valued and have supportive work environments is a crucial and necessary step to bring the K-12 and ECE systems in line with the evidence on learning as a continuum from birth onward and for achieving access to high-quality early learning for all children, regardless of their age.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Solving\\_Teacher\\_Shortage\\_Attract\\_Retain\\_Educators\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Solving_Teacher_Shortage_Attract_Retain_Educators_REPORT.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Takanishi, R. (2016). *First Things First! Creating the New American Primary School*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

<sup>3</sup> Whitebook, M. (2014). *Building a Skilled Teacher Workforce: Shared and Divergent Challenges in Early Care and Education and in Grades K-12*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

<sup>4</sup> Whitebook, M., McLean, C. & Austin L.J.E. (2016). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2016*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>5</sup> Due to limited space and lack of comparable data in many instances, home-based early care and education providers were not included in this discussion. For more information on the characteristics of home-based providers and related state policies, see Whitebook et al. (2016).

<sup>6</sup> Institute of Medicine (IOM) & National Research Council (NRC) (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/19401/transforming-the-workforce-for-children-birth-through-age-8-a>.

<sup>7</sup> Pianta, R., Downer, J. & Hamre, B. (2016). Quality in Early Education Classrooms: Definitions, Gaps, and Systems. *The Future of Children* 26(2): 119–137.

<sup>8</sup> See QRIS Resource Guide. Retrieved from <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?do=qrisabout>.

<sup>9</sup> See Teachstone CLASS website. Retrieved from <http://teachstone.com/classroom-assessment-scoring-system/>.

<sup>10</sup> IOM & NRC (2015).

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (2012). Table 4. Percentage distribution of public school teachers, by highest degree earned and state: 2011–12. *Schools and Staffing Survey*. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013314\\_t1s\\_004.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013314_t1s_004.asp).

<sup>12</sup> Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (2013). *Teachers: Preschool through postsecondary*. Retrieved from <http://dpeaflcio.org/professionals/professionals-in-the-workplace/teachers-and-college-professors/>.

- <sup>13</sup> At least 50 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide must have a bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's or advanced degree in any subject and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, along with experience teaching preschool-age children, see Office of Head Start (2012). *Statutory Degree and Credentialing Requirements for Head Start Teaching Staff*. Retrieved from [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/IMs/2008/resour\\_ime\\_012\\_0081908.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/IMs/2008/resour_ime_012_0081908.html).
- <sup>14</sup> Department of Health and Human Services (2015). *Notice of proposed rulemaking, Child Care and Development Fund Program*. Retrieved from <https://federalregister.gov/a/2015-31883>.
- <sup>15</sup> Barnett, W. S., Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Gomez, R. E., Horowitz, M., Weisenfeld, G. G., Brown, K. C. & Squires, J. H. (2016). *The State of Preschool 2015: State Preschool Yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/research/state-preschool-2015>; According to CSCCE analysis of NSECE data, 31 percent of all center-based ECE teachers have a state certification, while 56 percent of ECE teachers in school-sponsored facilities have a state certification.
- <sup>16</sup> The Child Development Associate® credential (CDA) represents a core set of educational competencies and practical experiences for teaching staff in early childhood settings. The CDA requires 120 hours of instructional and professional education related to six core competencies and 480 hours of teaching experience in a classroom and includes direct observation to document competence, family questionnaires, and a national exam. The CDA may be incorporated into a state's certification system and/or may be required by certain programs like Head Start and Early Head Start. As an organized, competency-based credential, the CDA represents foundational knowledge and skills essential for early childhood educators, and thus, the credential (or its equivalent) can serve as an initial marker of specialized training and experience for those responsible for children.
- <sup>17</sup> Office of Child Care. Data Explorer and State Profiles. "Minimum Preservice Qualifications" from analysis of 2014 state child care licensing regulations by the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement (Unpublished). Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/data>.
- <sup>18</sup> Barnett et al. (2016).
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Such as scholarship programs and bonus awards, see Whitebook et al. (2016).
- <sup>21</sup> Whitebook, M., Phillips, D. & Howes, C. (2014). *Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years After the National Child Care Staffing Study*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.
- <sup>22</sup> National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (NSECE) (2013). *Number and characteristics of early care and education (ECE) teachers and caregivers: Initial findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*. OPRE Report #2013-38. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece\\_wf\\_brief\\_102913\\_0.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece_wf_brief_102913_0.pdf).
- <sup>23</sup> CSCCE analysis of NSECE data.
- <sup>24</sup> NSECE (2013).
- <sup>25</sup> Loeb, S., Miller, L. & Strunk, K. (2009). The state role in teacher professional development and education throughout teachers' careers, p. 216. Retrieved from <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/edfp.2009.4.2.212>.
- <sup>26</sup> There is no longitudinal source of information, such as the K-12 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences, National Center of Education Statistics, which provides comparable data for the ECE workforce as a whole or by sector. No available research examines the percentage of teaching staff who completed their preparation prior to employment, but based on qualification requirements, preschool teachers in school-sponsored programs are the most likely to have done so. Higher qualifications for Head Start teachers, established in the 2007 Reauthorization of Head Start, allowed many teachers to return to school to earn degrees while employed, see Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law 110-134, 42 USC 9801 *et seq.* (Dec. 12, 2007). A CSCCE analysis of the National Survey of Early Care and Education suggests that roughly one-third of the center-based workforce was enrolled in a college course relevant to ECE during the year prior to data collection.
- <sup>27</sup> Whitebook, M., Austin, L., Ryan, S., Kipnis, F., Almaraz, M. & Sakai, L. (2012). *By default or by design? Variations in higher education programs for early care and education teachers and their implications for research methodology, policy, and practice*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from [http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2012/ByDefaultOrByDesign\\_FullReport\\_2012.pdf](http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2012/ByDefaultOrByDesign_FullReport_2012.pdf); Whitebook, M. & Austin, L.J.E. (2015). *Early Childhood Higher Education: Taking Stock Across the States*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/early-childhood-higher-education-taking-stock-across-the-states/>.
- <sup>28</sup> Maxwell, K.L., Lim, C.I. & Early, D.M. (2006). *Early childhood teacher preparation programs in the United States*: National report. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.
- <sup>29</sup> Whitebook et al. (2012). For information on ECE Higher Education Accreditation, see the two-year programs at <http://www.naeyc.org/ecada/> and the four-year and graduate programs at <http://www.naeyc.org/ncate/>.
- <sup>30</sup> Whitebook et al. (2016).
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> In 2012, 74 percent of center-based teachers were full-time workers; the median hours worked per week was 39.2. National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2013).
- <sup>33</sup> Only two states and three territories have a salary or wage scale for various professional roles, see Office of Child Care

Data Explorer and State Profiles. "PD Workforce: Compensation, Benefits, and Workforce Conditions." Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/data>. Comparable salary schedules to K-3 teachers are somewhat more common for ECE teachers in state-funded pre-K programs, particularly those in public school settings, see Barnett et al. (2016).

<sup>34</sup> See Podolsky et al. (2016); Allegretto, S. & Mishel, L. (2016). *The teacher pay gap is wider than ever*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from [www.epi.org/110964](http://www.epi.org/110964).

<sup>35</sup> Whitebook et al. (2016).

<sup>36</sup> For further info, see Whitebook et al. (2016).

<sup>37</sup> See National Center for Education Statistics (2012). Table 4. Percentage of public school districts that offered various benefits to teachers, by state: 2011–12. *Schools and Staffing Study*. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112\\_2013311\\_d1s\\_004.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass1112_2013311_d1s_004.asp).

<sup>38</sup> See National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2013). Six states and one territory offer or facilitate benefits (e.g., health insurance coverage, retirement) for the workforce. Office of Child Care Data Explorer and State Profiles. "PD Workforce: Compensation, Benefits, and Workforce Conditions." Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/data>.

<sup>39</sup> CSCCE analysis of NSECE data. Percentage with access to health insurance via employer: school-sponsored (64 percent); Head Start (60 percent); public pre-K, not school-sponsored (29 percent); all other centers (25 percent).

<sup>40</sup> Child Care Services Association (2015). *Working in Early Care and Education in North Carolina: 2015 Workforce Study*. Chapel Hill, NC: Child Care Services Association. Retrieved from <http://www.childcareservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2015-Workforce-Report-FNL.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Even where financing for ECE is most similar to K-12 (i.e. in state-funded pre-K programs) stark differences remain in the adequacy and stability of funding, see Barnett, W.S. & Kasmin, R. (2016). *Funding Landscape for Preschool with a Highly Qualified Workforce*. Paper commissioned for Funding Landscape for Preschool with a Highly Qualified Workforce: An Expert Meeting. Washington, DC: Board on Children, Youth, and Families. December 12, 2016. Retrieved from [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse\\_176099.pdf](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse_176099.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> CSCCE analysis of NSECE.

<sup>43</sup> Hirsch, B. & Macpherson, D. (2016). Union Membership and Coverage Database from the CPS (*Unionstats.com*). Table V: Occupation: Union Membership, Coverage, Density, and Employment by Occupation, 1983–2015.

<sup>44</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics occupational data does not permit disaggregating preschool and kindergarten teachers. We rely on the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education for information about union members. Although less recent, the NSECE more accurately captures characteristics of those working in center-based child care and preschool programs. NSECE estimates also demonstrate that about a quarter (26 percent) of center-based teaching staff are members of a professional organization related to providing services for children, but there is no information available about whether these organizations also represent early educators with regard to pay and working conditions.

<sup>45</sup> See National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2013).

<sup>46</sup> Even when ECE teachers are members of labor unions, they are not necessarily represented by one of the two major teachers' unions in K-12 (American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association). In addition to public employee unions, such as Service Employee International Union, ECE teachers may be represented by unions such as the Teamsters. The largest professional organization in ECE, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), in contrast to National Education Association, does not represent teachers in collective bargaining.

<sup>47</sup> National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2014). *Characteristics of Center-based Early Care and Education Programs: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*. OPRE Report #2014-73a, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/characteristics\\_of\\_cb\\_ece\\_programs\\_111014.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/characteristics_of_cb_ece_programs_111014.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2016). *Early Care and Education Usage and Households' Out-of-pocket Costs: Tabulations from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*. OPRE Report #2016-09, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece\\_usage\\_and\\_cost\\_tabulations\\_081216\\_toopre\\_b508\\_2.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece_usage_and_cost_tabulations_081216_toopre_b508_2.pdf).

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<sup>50</sup> Podolsky et al. (2016).

<sup>51</sup> Whitebook, M., Phillips, D. & Howes, C. (2014); Cassidy, D.J., Lower, J.K., Kintner-Duffy, V.L., Hegde, A.V. & Shim, J. (2011). The day-to-day reality of teacher turnover in preschool classrooms: An analysis of classroom context and teacher, director, and parent perspectives. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 25(1), 1–23; Whitebook, M. & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 18(3), 273–293. doi:10.1016/S0885-2006(03)00040-1; Whitebook, M. & Sakai, L. (2004). *By a Thread: How Child Care Centers Hold On to Teachers, How Teachers Build Lasting Careers*. Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research; Minervino, J. (2014). *Lessons from Research and the Classroom: Implementing High-Quality pre-K that Makes a Difference for Young Children*. Retrieved from <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/Lessons%20from%20Research%20and%20the%20Classroom%20September%202014.pdf>; Totenhagen, C.J., Hawkins, S.A., Casper, D.M., Bosch, L.A., Hawkey, K.R. & Borden, L.M. (2016). Retaining Early Childhood Education Workers: A Review of the Empirical Literature. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 30(4), 585–599.

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<sup>55</sup> Haynes, M. (2014). *On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from <http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Whitebook et al. (2014).

<sup>57</sup> Bos, J.M., Phillips-Fain, G., Rein, E., Weinberg, E. & Chavez, S. (2016). *Connecting All Children to High-Quality Early Care and Education: Promising Strategies from the International Community*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from <http://www.air.org/system/files/downloads/report/High-Quality-Early-Care-and-Education-International-October-2016.pdf>; Naumann, I., McLean, C., Koslowski, A., Tisdall, K. & Lloyed, E. (2013). *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision: International Review of Policy, Delivery and Funding*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Social Research. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0041/00416230.pdf>.

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

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