

THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE



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Children in quality child care programs perform better in math, language and reading and show fewer behavioral problems. Research overwhelmingly finds that provider training, retention and compensation are the best indicators for child care quality. A well-trained child care workforce is needed to meet the increasing demand for quality child care in the United States to ensure that children start school ready to learn.

Child care workers provide vital services to families with young children in a variety of

settings, including public and private centers, prekindergarten programs and home-based environments.

- Approximately 2.3 million individuals earn a living caring for and educating children younger than age 5 in the United States, of which about 1.2 million are providing child care in formal settings, such as child care centers or family child care homes. The remaining 1.1 million caregivers are paid relatives, friends or neighbors.

Provider Setting	Number of Workers ¹	Percent of Workers
Center-based Staff	550,000	24%
Family Child Care Home Providers	650,000	28%
Paid Relatives	804,000	34%
Paid Non-Relatives	298,000	13%
Total	2,301,000	100%

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the size of the formal child care workforce at 1.3 million. 94.7 percent of these workers are women.²
- 16 percent of the formal child care workforce is Black or African-American and 19.1 percent are of Hispanic or Latino origin.³

Children in early care and education are better prepared for school when their teachers have higher levels of education and specialized training.

- The amount of formal education attained by a provider is the strongest predictor for the provider's ability to engage children in developmentally appropriate activities and positive interactions that better prepare them for school. A 2002 study of over 200 family child care providers showed that training was a stronger predictor of quality care than the provider's experience, group size, ratio of children to adults, or percent of infants in the care setting.⁴
- Providers with specialized training are more likely to be nurturing, reinforce early literacy skills and challenge and enhance children's learning. In one study of center-based providers, those who

¹ Center for the Child Care Workforce. *Estimating the Size and Components of the U.S. Child Care Workforce and Caregiving Population*. May 2002. (<http://www.ccw.org/pubs/workforceestimatereport.pdf>), 17.

²United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Household Data Annual Averages: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2010. (<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>).

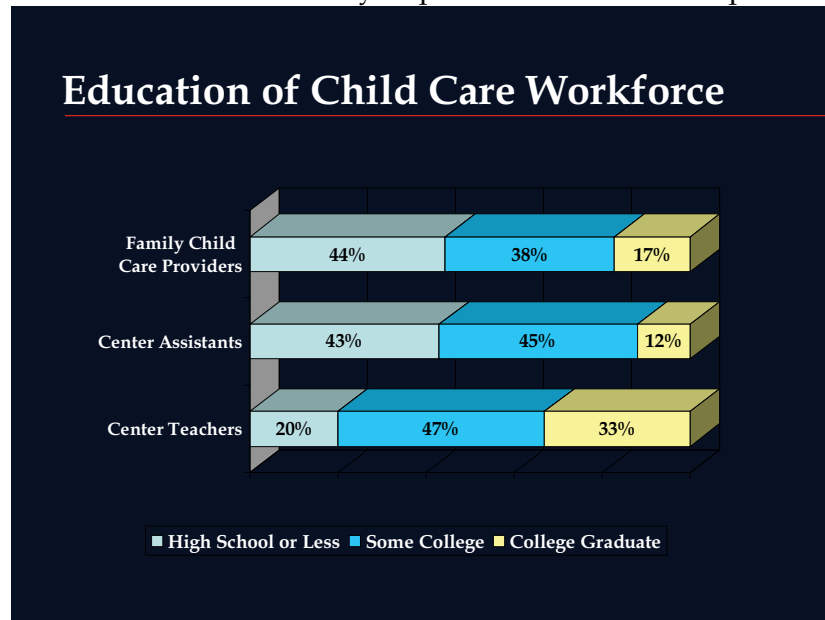
³ Ibid

⁴ Burchinal, M., C. Howes, and S. Kontos. "Structural predictors of child care quality in child care homes." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 17:889-107, 2002.

had attended training had more positive interactions with children and were less likely to restrict children's activities and ignore their requests.⁵

Many child care providers lack the education and training necessary to provide quality child care.

- Only 13 states require child care providers in centers to have initial training in early childhood education prior to working with children.⁶
- Only 55 percent of family child care providers and 57 percent of center assistants have at least some college education.⁷ Center teachers fare better with 80 percent having some college education, however, center-based staff account for only 24 percent of all child care providers.⁸



Low compensation and high job turnover adversely affect the quality of care that child care workers are able to provide.

- Despite the important role they play in child development, child care workers are among the lowest paid workers in the United States. Only 24 of 823 occupations reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics have lower average wages than child care workers.⁹
- Child care providers earn an average wage of only \$10.07 an hour. With average salaries of \$20,940 a year for child care workers,¹⁰ many individuals holding these jobs do not earn very much more than the 2009/2010 federal poverty level of \$18,310 annually for a family of three.¹¹
- Benefits for child care workers are minimal and inconsistent. A 2002 Study of the Kansas workforce showed that only 41 percent of center staff received partially or fully paid health benefits.¹² Family child care providers, who work out of their homes, invariably have fewer benefits.

⁵ Howes, C. "Caregiver behavior in center and family day care." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. 4:99-107, 1983.

⁶ National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA). (2011). *We can do better: NACCRRRA's ranking of state child care center regulations and oversight: 2011 Update*. <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/>

⁷ Center for the Child Care Workforce. *Estimating the Size and Components of the U.S. Child Care Workforce and Caregiving Population*. May 2002. (<http://www.ccw.org/pubs/workforceestimatereport.pdf>), 24.

⁸ Center for the Child Care Workforce. *Estimating the Size and Components of the U.S. Child Care Workforce and Caregiving Population*. May 2002. (<http://www.ccw.org/pubs/workforceestimatereport.pdf>), 17.

⁹ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2009. Retrieved February 17, 2011, from <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ US Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. (2010). *HHS Poverty Guidelines for the Remainder of 2010*. Retrieved February 24, 2011, from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/10poverty.shtml>.

- In a field where continuity is of primary importance, the child care workforce experiences an annual job turnover rate of between 25 and 40 percent.¹³ High turnover often means that experienced teachers are replaced by novice teachers, who may not share the educational qualifications of their predecessors.¹⁴

State compensation programs have shown promise for improving provider education levels. North Carolina's Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) initiative provides scholarships to child care providers pursuing a credential or advanced degree. Teachers participating in the associate degree scholarship program improved their education levels and left their child care centers at a rate of less than 9 percent per year.¹⁵ Turnover rates for T.E.A.C.H. associate degree scholarship recipients are very low. For example, less than 5 percent in 14 states, 5-9 percent in 6 states and 10 percent in 1 state. 23 states have since adopted the program.¹⁶

For more information:

http://www.childcareservices.org/_downloads/TEACH%20annual%20report_08.pdf

¹² Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education in Kansas. "Who Cares for Kansas Children? Early Education Workforce Study." April 2002.

¹³ Center for the Child Care Workforce. *Current Data on the Salaries and Benefits of the U.S. Early Childhood Education Workforce*. June 2004. (<http://www.ccw.org/pubs/2004Compendium.pdf>), 5.

¹⁴ Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership. *Trends Over Time: Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce*. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Extension, November 2003.

¹⁵ Child Care Services Association. "T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project." (<http://www.childcareservices.org/teach/project.html#benefits/results>).

¹⁶ The Urban Institute. "Looking Beyond Government: The Transfer of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Model Across States." January 2004. (http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310926_ChartingCivilSociety_15.pdf).