

Colorado Early Childhood Workforce Survey 2017



Key Findings

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Over 4,700 teachers, directors, and family child care providers across Colorado were surveyed on their professional and workplace characteristics. Key findings from the survey include the following. Access a series of briefs with more findings from the survey at coloradoecworkforce.org.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Half of the teachers in the sample work in classrooms in which they do not speak the primary languages of each of the children in their classrooms. Sixty-two percent of these language mismatches occur when there are children in the classroom that speak Spanish, but the reporting teacher does not.

Latina teachers are less likely to be in lead teaching and leadership roles and are more likely to be in assistant teaching roles than are White, non-Latina teachers.

Eighty-one percent of directors and 71% of lead teachers have at least an Associates degree; 48% of directors and 72% of teachers with degrees do not hold at least one degree focused on the care and education of young children.

Early care and education (ECE) centers that enroll children receiving Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) subsidies are more likely to employ non-degreed teachers than are centers that do not enroll children receiving CCCAP subsidies.

There is a strong desire by many early educators to pursue educational advancement, yet many also indicate that they would need financial support and more convenient course offerings (e.g., convenient times and locations and online course options) to do so.

COMPENSATION

Pursuing educational advancement does not result in substantially higher wages for many early educators. The average difference in hourly wages for a teacher with a high school diploma and a teacher with a bachelor's degree is \$3.07.

The median hourly wages for lead teachers across ECE service sectors ranges from \$14.00 to \$16.50 an hour, with family child care providers earning a median hourly wage of \$12.63 an hour.

TURNOVER, RETENTIONS, AND INTENTIONS TO STAY

Turnover rates among job roles range from 16% to 40%, with the highest levels of turnover in paraprofessional roles and in community-based and Head Start programs.

Approximately 70% of directors report difficulty finding teachers to fill vacant positions, with position vacancies taking an average of 2.5 months to fill. Forty-nine percent of directors indicated that they often had to fill vacant positions with unqualified teachers.

Higher wages are associated with less teacher turnover in centers, and working on an academic calendar year is associated with greater retention of qualified teachers. Higher wages, more workplace benefits, and having stronger collaborative leadership in a center predict teachers' intentions to stay in their jobs.

WORKFORCE WELL-BEING

Moderate levels of occupational burnout (e.g., emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) are found among teachers and family child care providers. However, most also report a sense of fulfillment with the work. A higher than expected rate of depression was found among teachers.

Low morale among teachers, participation in Colorado Shines, having a Bachelor's degree, excessive paperwork, having multiple rules, standards, and reporting requirements in a classroom, a punitive work environment, and high classroom ratios predict greater occupational burnout among teachers.

Working in a center with leadership that promote a stronger shared vision among staff, employ more collaborative leadership, and foster greater collegiality among teachers predict less occupational burnout among teachers.

Teacher collegiality, having a highly educated director (B.A. or higher), and working on an academic year (9-months) predict less depression among teachers.

For family child care providers, frustration with state licensing requirements, higher levels of education, working more days a week, and caring for children with challenging behaviors predict greater feelings of occupational burnout.

This brief was developed as part of the Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado project, an innovative public-private partnership to advance the early childhood workforce in Colorado.

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