

Child Care Workforce Study



Executive Summary

Introduction

From May - June 2012 an early care and education work force survey was conducted in Kentucky. This survey focused on background, experience, education, professional development, wages, and benefits of this population. Surveys were sent to center directors, teachers and teacher assistants, and family child care homes. The goal was to provide a description of the child care workforce, including wages and benefits, retention and professional development. Findings are designed to inform both policy and quality improvement efforts.

Surveys were disseminated via email and mail, based on availability of a valid email address for each population. A total of 550 certified family child care home providers received the survey with 66 (12%) completed. Another 1789 surveys were sent out to directors of licensed child care centers with 259 (15%) returning a valid survey. A work force survey was also sent to 31,116 teachers and teacher assistants with 1,184 (4%) completing the survey.

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents were largely female (more than 98%). For the respondents that provided level of education, these ranged from high school diploma or equivalent to PhD. Directors and teachers/teacher assistants were more likely to have a Bachelor's degree (42% of directors; 62.6% of teachers/teacher assistants). Thirty-one percent of certified family child care home providers reported having a Bachelor's degree and another 31% reported having an Associate degree.

Wages and Benefits

This survey found wages for the child care work force in Kentucky are below the national average. The median income for owners of certified family child care home homes was \$20,800 per year. Director's reported median salaries for new hires at \$28,000 for directors, \$21,000 for teachers, and \$15,800 for teacher assistants. Teachers and teacher assistants reported current average earnings of \$22,728.33 per year. This contrasts to the average median nationwide salary of \$43,950 for Directors, \$27,130 for Teachers, and \$19,510 for Teachers Aides (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

A small percent of teachers/teacher assistants and certified family child care providers reported supplementing their income through another job. This included 14% of certified providers and 17% of teachers/teacher assistants.

Access to some level of employee provided health care was reported by 39% of directors and approximately 36% of teachers and teacher assistants. While this exceeds nationwide figures of 33% and 21% (Herzenberg, Price, & Bradley, 2005; Smith & Baughman, 2007) it is still significantly below the percentage of the workforce as a whole (66%) (Smith & Baughman, 2007). While 64% of family child care providers reported having access to health coverage, the majority were covered by spouse's health insurance. Fourteen percent of family child care

providers reported having their own health policy. This is similar to the figure of 12% cited for other home-based providers of child care (Smith & Baughman, 2007).

Other than health insurance, respondents most frequently reported the following benefits: financial assistance for workshops, paid holidays, paid vacation, on-site workday training, and off-site workday training.

Retention

Approximately 2% of directors in licensed child care reported they had left their job in the past year, compared to 20% of teachers and 30% of teacher assistants. The national rate of turnover for teachers as cited by Porter (2012) is 30%. In general, directors spent more time in their current center and had more years of experience than teachers; while teachers spent more time in their center as well as had more years of experience than teacher assistants.

Most teachers and teacher assistants reported being satisfied with their employment, with 45% reporting their position as a “career” rather than a “job”. The majority of all respondents indicated they saw themselves working in the early childhood field three years from now. Those who planned to leave the field stated the reasons as low pay and no benefits.

Professional Development

When asked about the availability of professional development opportunities near their home or work, 49% of directors, 56% of teachers/teacher assistants, and 52% of certified home providers indicated this was not a problem. Respondents in the eastern and western areas of the state expressed more concern than those in central Kentucky. Approximately 49% of all respondents were able to find affordable professional development, with concern greater in the east and west than in the central Kentucky regions. Finally, 37% of directors, 49% of teachers/teacher assistants, and 50% of certified home providers reported access to high quality training opportunities, with directors in the central Kentucky area most concerned about finding high quality opportunities (22% disagree/strongly disagree).

When directors were asked about the ability to find qualified staff, 55% felt they could find staff with experience in the field of early childhood. Directors indicated it was harder to find staff qualified to teach and nurture children with special needs (32%); find qualified infant staff (36%); find qualified toddler staff (36%) and find qualified staff with degrees and training in early childhood education (37%).

Fourteen percent of teachers/assistants stated their salary had increased when their education level increased. Less than 5% of respondents reported receiving other benefits such as increased vacation, sick leave, health insurance coverage, coverage for training, and more retirement benefits when they improved their educational status. The majority reported no additional benefits were provided following an increase in education level.

References

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