

South Carolina Early Care & Education Workforce Study 2018

Executive Summary

Commissioned and funded by South Carolina Department
of Social Services' Division of Early Care and Education



Executive Summary

Introduction

Multi-disciplinary research attests to the important link between quality of early care and education and the role of the adults in these settings. Teachers and caregivers form meaningful bonds with the children in their care, and their interactions, behaviors, and teaching practices all influence children’s development, as well as their later school readiness (NRC, 2001; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004). Fittingly, South Carolina has established multiple initiatives which have sought to bolster the skills and knowledge of the workforce, to tie their educational attainment to higher pay, and to reduce teacher turnover. Yet, issues identified more than 20 years ago—inadequate training and education, low wages, and high turnover—are still problematic today (Herzenberg et al., 2005; Kagan et al., 2008; Whitebook, 2003; Whitebook et al., 2001, Marsh, 2001). To address these issues, policy makers need a complete picture of South Carolina teachers and caregivers—their professional preparation, working conditions, compensation, training, and qualifications.

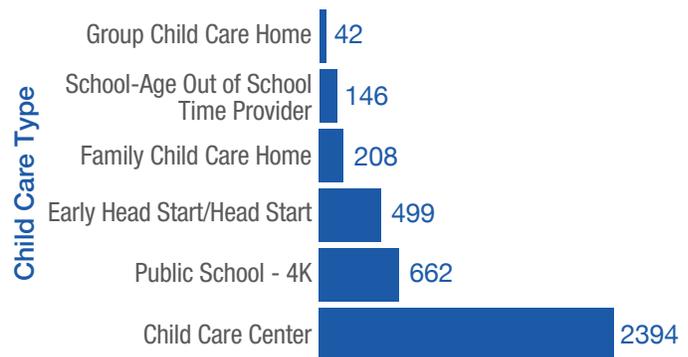
Knowledge of the SC ECE workforce is essential to understanding the impact of ECE initiatives, policies, and practices on children and child outcomes. Therefore, through funding from the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) at South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS), the administrator for the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), SC Endeavors (formerly the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development) and Yvonne & Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center (CDRC) at the University of South Carolina conducted a statewide survey of the early care and education workforce. This study is the first of its kind in South Carolina including responses from individuals who work directly in classrooms with young children across varied sectors. Building on the previous SC ECE workforce study (Marsh, 2001), the goal of this study was to learn more about characteristics of the ECE workforce, ECE facilities where they work, the working conditions of their employment and their attitudes and dispositions about their work.

Background

There is a consensus in the field of ECE that obtaining comprehensive data on the ECE workforce is challenging (Whitebook, et al, 2018). This workforce is defined and shaped by many contextual factors, such as, working conditions, compensation, professional development opportunities, incentives and systems

of recognition, and administrative support, as well as, policies at the federal, state, and local levels. Although the national datasets are a great resource, they do not capture the state-level complexities and nuances of the diverse ECE systems and CCDF administrations in the country. Therefore, it was important for South Carolina to conduct a statewide workforce study to supplement information from the national databases. This study was conducted using a single online survey deployed through SurveyMonkey.com. The survey captured the demographic information of the workforce, their employment conditions, job satisfaction, aspirations, and training needs in South Carolina. One survey design was used for all individuals, regardless of position. The total response used for this study was 4,002.

SC ECE Workforce Study 2018 Respondents by Child Care Type



Key Findings

Qualifications and Educational Supports

Adequate preparation and access to foundational knowledge is necessary for South Carolina teachers and administrators to develop the skills to provide high-quality learning experiences for children.

- 68% of respondents have some type of academic degree
- 34% have a degree in early childhood or a related field
- Respondents have an average of 14 years of experience in the field
- 64% report membership in a professional association
- 28% of respondents participated in the TEACH scholarship program

Work Environments

Workplace supports, such as paid planning time, paid time for professional development and, positive workplace climate are needed to ensure ongoing reflection, development, and educator well-being for South Carolina's early childhood workforce.

- 75% of respondents reported high satisfaction levels with their job.
- Over 50% of respondents reported paid sick and vacation leave.
- 48% reported having workplace sponsored medical insurance
- 18% reported paid breaks
- 16% reported paid planning time

Compensation

Improving work conditions, which includes higher compensation, leads to substantial and sustained improvements in the quality of South Carolina early childhood education services. (2014, Whitebook) Appropriate compensation and economic security are indispensable for attracting and retaining skilled educators.

- 94% of the workforce earn less than \$20.00 per hour with 50% earning \$10.00 per hour or less
- Median wage for Public school teachers exceeds wages reported from child care teachers by \$11.00 per hour
- Approximately 59% of the workforce reported earning less than \$40,000 annually

Diversity

Supporting the development and learning of each and every child in South Carolina means recruiting and maintaining a diverse, well-qualified and culturally competent workforce.

- 35% of respondents indicated having at least one student with a disability in their classroom
- 31% of respondents stated having at least one student whose home language is not English in their classroom
- 6% of respondents reported as bi/multi-lingual
- 39% of the respondents identified as African American; 3% identified as Latino

Using the SC ECE Workforce Study 2018

This study reports the voices from people in South Carolina working in a variety of child care, Head Start/ Early Head Start, and public 4-K programs, holding various positions, thus, providing valuable insights into South Carolina's ECE workforce. These respondents, from all corners of South Carolina, have taken the time to give policy makers insights into the characteristics of this workforce. DSS-DECE will use the data for evidence-based decisions, guidance in the development of ECE strategic plans in the state, including the state CCDF plan. Policy recommendations follow.

- The representative sample from all types of child care in both urban and rural geographic areas provides legislators and policymakers a better evaluation of the impact of their policies.
- The data from this study can be used by policy makers, researchers, grant writers and other stakeholders to identify areas of advocacy and policy development.
- The demographic data on the diverse children served (e.g. dual language children and children with special needs) highlight areas of needed supports for teachers and directors.
- Comparative analyses of the SC ECE Workforce study 2018 by child care type such as child care and public pre-K could generate actions on pay equity among the diverse segments of the field.
- Data on a lack of resource knowledge by the respondents presents an opportunity to launch a more robust marketing campaign on available yet underused resources in the state.
- Using data for better estimation in initiatives to incentivize employer practices that promote better work conditions resulting in better teacher stability and greater retention of teachers that lead to better child outcomes.

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