

THE EARLY CARE + EDUCATION WORKFORCE IN OHIO

Early childhood education (ECE) is a workforce largely made up of women and particularly, women of color. The working conditions of this field often underscore the workers' important work, skills, experience, and contributions to the development of children. These conditions lead to high turnover rates and teacher staffing shortages, which directly impacts the availability of care for families.¹

Early educators in Ohio earn a median
★ wage of \$12.02 per hour, which is 17%
(or \$2.39) below the living wage
\$14.41 for one adult with no children.



Approximately 12.9% of the ECE
workforce in Ohio lives at or below
★ the federal poverty line. This means
the ECE workforce is 9.9 times
more likely to live in poverty

Nationally, 43% of early educator
families rely on public safety net
★ programs, such as Medicaid and
SNAP



Teacher position, race, ethnicity, classroom age,
program type, and Step Up to Quality rating all
have impacts on teacher compensation ¹



5 Essential Workforce Policy Areas of Opportunity

Directing efforts into several avenues of change brings ideas and action together to work towards a shared vision. Through collective action, policy change can occur to pursue the future of a more equitable and just ECE system. ¹

Listed below are policy opportunities presented by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, along with examples of how to put these concepts into action.

Public Funding

"All states, territories, and Tribes have sufficient, equitable, and sustainable public funding to prepare, support, and compensate the ECE workforce across all settings."

How?

Use cost models to calculate the costs of workforce preparation, pay, and improved working conditions and seek sustainable investment opportunities

Compensation and Financial Relief

"All early educators are equitably compensated with professional pay and receive standard benefits, including paid time off, health insurance, and retirement."

How?

Adopt compensation support payment programs

Workforce Data

"All states collect and report up-to-date, comprehensive ECE workforce information that is transparent and used to design and implement professional development pathways and delivery of workforce supports."

How?

Maintain a workforce registry and provide regular assessment to address disparities in key areas such as educational attainment, pay, and tenure

Work Environment Standards

"All early educators flourish in well-resourced work environments that prioritize teaching supports, a robust learning community to develop teaching practice, educator agency and autonomy, and comprehensive policies that promote economic, emotional, physical, and professional well-being."

How?

Adopt policies similar to K-12 such as paid time off, planning time, and substitute pools

Qualifications and Educational Supports

"All early educators working with children age birth to five have access to support and resources to acquire foundational knowledge and pursue ongoing learning."

How?

Align education, training, and supports from PreK to higher education

In early 2025, Governor DeWine spoke at a workforce summit, stating that strengthening the state's workforce requires fixing Ohio's child care crisis. The fixes include making high-quality child care affordable, accessible, and requires deep and intentional investments. ³

There are almost 811,000 children aged 0-5 in Ohio

2

25% of parents with young children in the state have had to leave the workforce due to the lack of affordable child care

3, 6

Ohio's early childhood teaching workforce is over 58,000 strong

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People who work closely with children and families (particularly child care providers) report staff shortages and high turnover rates

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In Summit County, 7.7% of a family's income is spent on childcare

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SEI has created an income sufficiency dashboard -the Income Sufficiency Rate is a measure of workforce progress and economic mobility that incorporates the burden of child care costs

- 1- [Center for the Study of Child Care Employment \(CSCCE\), 2024](#)
- 2- [Groundwork Ohio, The Workforce Behind the Workforce](#)
- 3- [Governor and other Experts Insist Child Care is Key to Solving Ohio's Workforce Crisis](#)
- 4- [Healthy NEO, 2025](#)
- 5- [ACH Community Health Needs Assessment, 2022](#)
- 6- [Groundwork Ohio, Poll 2024](#)