

# White Paper: Results from a Survey of DC's Early Childhood Education Workforce

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## I. Executive Summary

Throughout the country, the cost of early care and education (ECE) is high – often prohibitively high for working parents of infants and toddlers. In the District of Columbia, both families and providers must reckon with not only the high cost of care, but also the shortage of available slots in high-quality child development centers and homes. Such care is not only an essential support for working parents; research shows that structured environments with nurturing educators are essential for developing healthy cognition and social-emotional skills in the earliest years of a child’s life.

Despite the high costs to families, the business model for ECE providers is not lucrative. The costs for maintaining the space, programming, and staff often exceed monthly revenues. Most providers are forced to manage these circumstances by compensating staff with low wages. In the District, an early educator can expect to make around \$26,900 per year – about 27% of the Area Median Income for a family of three. National data also suggests that the

ECE workforce receives less competitive compensation packages than other professionals who work with young children, and are less likely to have access to paid sick leave, retirement benefits, and other crucial worker supports.

While awareness of the poor compensation is growing, relatively little is known about who the ECE workers in the District are, and how they experience the pressures of the field’s economy. The lack of comprehensive data on DC’s ECE workforce makes it difficult to deliver effective policy solutions that can promote the economic security of early educators while supporting availability of affordable, quality care for District families. In order to learn more about the area’s workforce, DC Appleseed surveyed ECE professionals in all eight wards of the District. Early educators were asked about their demographics, experience working in ECE, challenges, qualifications, and existing supports for their professional goals.

Based on our sample, the District's ECE workforce is comprised mostly of women, the majority of whom are Black (including 54% identified as African American, while another 6% were African/Caribbean). The preponderance of women of color in DC's workforce outpaces national ECE figures, meaning that the way the District addresses the challenges facing this workforce has implications for gender and racial equity in the community. Economic anxieties loom large among DC's early educators: nearly 80% of our sample regularly worried about their ability to pay their monthly bills. And while most of the educators surveyed had attended at least some college, a large proportion of the sample did not have the credentials necessary to meet the District's new licensing rules, which will require lead ECE teachers to hold an associate degree, and center directors to hold bachelor's degrees by 2020. Our results also indicate that early educators who work with infants and toddlers are less likely to have a college degree than educators who work primarily with three- to five-year-olds.

Despite these challenges, results from our survey suggested a commitment to the field. About 80% of both teachers and directors surveyed indicated that they intended to stay in the field for at least three more years. The workforce's demonstrated commitment to the field suggests that investing in their professional development opportunities is a sound choice for the District, especially in areas such as teaching children with special needs.

Importantly, we also found that connecting with the District's early educators, who, by the nature of the job, work in disparate and often isolated settings, was difficult. We did not meet our goal of surveying one-third of the District's ECE workforce, in part due to difficulty connecting with the workforce; thus, our sample may not be representative of the entire workforce. For this and other reasons, we did not achieve statistical significance in our responses, and cannot report on some of the quantitative data we collected such as compensation. The challenges we encountered in outreach reinforce the need for the District to better compile data on the ECE workforce, including contact information.

Despite the challenges of administering the survey, we believe our results provide an important snapshot of ECE educators in the District. By comparing to national data and results from earlier research, as well as cross-sectional analysis within the sample, we have made observations and recommendations that can be useful in setting policy and supporting an extremely important sector of DC's workforce. These recommendations include proposals to a) better understand the ECE workforce; b) mitigate key challenges faced by the ECE workforce; c) support professional growth and retention within the ECE workforce; and d) identify and develop resources to help programs improve compensation and support for workers.

## II. Introduction: Purpose and Goals of Workforce Survey

The DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice is a non-profit public policy research and advocacy organization working on a variety of challenges facing the National Capital area. We have been studying the issue of early care and education (ECE) for several years. We entered the discussion because we recognized the interconnected issues of education and workforce at play in the ECE field. The latest science underscores the importance of quality early education from birth to age three, indicating that it can set the stage for academic achievement later in a child's life, with significant benefit conferred on low-income families.<sup>1</sup> However, the District of Columbia is facing a shortage of space for all the infants and toddlers seeking to enroll in high-quality child care centers and homes, and the cost is often unaffordable for many families. At the same time, the economics of operating a high-quality center are often unsustainable for business owners and their staff, especially when serving low-income families.

We researched these issues with the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI) and published our recommendations in a 2016

report, *Solid Footing: Reinforcing the Early Care and Education Economy for Infants and Toddlers in DC*.<sup>2</sup> The report was informally known as the “cost of quality” study, because we studied the expenses and revenues of centers and homes that were gold-rated by the District’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A gold rating is the highest rating a program can achieve under the District’s QRIS and includes standards significantly beyond those necessary for licensing, including national accreditation. Our results in this study confirmed that many providers of high-quality ECE services in the District struggle to make ends meet financially, and face challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. For providers serving low-income families through the District’s child care subsidy program, reimbursement rates cover only 66-70% of the actual cost of providing care to infants and toddlers. The work on *Solid Footing* also confirmed what many already knew: most providers manage these circumstances by compensating staff at rates much lower than that paid to other health and education professionals who work with young children. The average annual earnings of an infant or toddler teacher in DC is just \$26,900.<sup>3</sup>

As a follow-up to our *Solid Footing* report, DC Appleseed undertook a survey to better

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation,” Part II: The Science of Child Development and Early Learning, 2015. Available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/19401/chapter/6>.

<sup>2</sup> DC Appleseed, “Solid Footing: Reinforcing the Early Care and Education Economy for Infants and Toddlers in DC,” 2016. Available at

[http://www.dcappleseed.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Solid-Footing\\_Cost-of-ECE-Report\\_March-2016.pdf](http://www.dcappleseed.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Solid-Footing_Cost-of-ECE-Report_March-2016.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Child Care Aware of America, “Child Care in America: 2016 State Fact Sheets,” p 39. Available at <http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2016-Fact-Sheets-Full-Report-02-27-17.pdf>.

understand the challenges and opportunities faced by the District’s ECE workforce, with particular attention to those working with infants and toddlers. This project was funded by the Bainum Family Foundation as part of the Birth-to-Three Policy Alliance. Workforce surveys are a tool that many jurisdictions use to help track changes and improvements in ECE, and to better understand the strengths and needs of those who provide essential services to children and families. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Early Learning Challenge – Technical Assistance program:

states have conducted these studies in order to better understand the make-up and credentials of the workforce, as well as the environmental conditions, such as benefits, compensation and turnover rates among the early learning workforce. Information and data from these studies will help States with policy discussions, enable responsible decision making, and support work at the systems level that will develop a stronger workforce and ultimately higher quality early education for young children.

At a time when both science and public policy are pushing to define and raise “quality” in ECE, our goal is to ensure that the District’s investment in the ECE workforce is well-targeted to produce the best possible outcomes for low-income families and vulnerable young children.

The purpose of the DC Appleseed survey was to collect information from the employees of child development homes and classrooms in DC to:

- Better understand the individuals in the workforce;
- Identify the challenges they face as workers and residents of the DC metro area;
- Learn about their professional goals and how best to support their professional growth and commitment to the field; and
- Identify the resources necessary to help programs improve compensation and working conditions for staff, while meeting the increased demands of new licensing and labor standards.

We designed the survey to collect the following types of information, key findings from which will be presented below:

- a. Demographics
- b. Current and Past ECE Employment
- c. Compensation and Benefits
- d. Educational Attainment
- e. Economic Security
- f. Professional Goals and Interests

Some of our findings, however, concerned the limitations we encountered in reaching these individuals. Despite using a highly accessible platform, conducting individual and group outreach, and providing hands-on support, we fell short of our goal of surveying one-third of ECE teachers in the District. We encountered similar access

limitations in our work with DCFPI on the *Solid Footing* report. Therefore, some of our recommendations address the need to build the field’s professional infrastructure in the District, in order to make it possible to more directly communicate with teachers, as well as study the trends and needs of the field. Notwithstanding limited access to the workforce, we believe the access we did have provides a useful basis for the observations presented in our discussion and recommendations below.

### III. Methodology

#### A. Survey Design and Administration

Our ultimate policy goals are aligned and inseparable: 1) to expand the supply of safe, nurturing, high-quality early education environments for infants and toddlers in the District, and 2) to support the workforce of ECE professionals, which has been historically underpaid and lacked key professional supports. To inform the strategies to achieve these key policy outcomes, we set out to do a qualitative and quantitative study of the District’s early childhood workforce. By gathering this data, we hoped to better understand the strengths within and challenges faced by the workforce. We planned to use this information to inform specific, practical recommendations for supporting the ECE workforce, with a particular interest in factors impacting retention.

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<sup>4</sup> 26 minutes was the time required to answer all survey questions, based on the question formats we selected (e.g., multiple choice, short text). Because

To gain this information, we developed a conditional logic survey for ECE professionals in the District which included variations depending upon identified type of facility (center or home), role (director or owner or staff), and classroom role (e.g., lead teacher 0–2 year olds, assistant teacher 0–2 year olds). The questions primarily addressed demographic and employer information, professional and ECE experience, compensation and benefits, and career objectives. The survey was designed by DC Appleseed staff with input from other experts. It was designed to require 15 minutes to complete. According to Survey Gizmo, the paid online service we used as the survey platform, the automated length estimate was 26 minutes.<sup>4</sup> The platform rated the “fatigue score” as low and accessibility as high.

Administration of the survey was guided by our objective to maximize participation. The survey was accessible online to anyone with a link through Survey Gizmo, and both the survey and the outreach emails were available in English, Spanish and Amharic. We determined to err on the side of confidentiality and not identify individuals according to their affiliated program unless it was volunteered. This was done to maximize trust of participants, even though it hindered our ability to determine the representativeness of the responses.

Since little information exists on the size and composition of the District’s early childhood workforce, we used local

of the conditional logic, no respondent would be invited to answer all questions.

estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This included DC’s “childcare workers” (1,750), which includes many of the teachers in community-based organizations, plus 20% of preschool teachers to represent those not in the public schools (990 x 20%), and 300 ECE preschool education program managers; taken together, these produced an approximate number of 2,250 teachers in the District’s community-based ECE centers and homes.<sup>5</sup> We then determined that we should seek a minimum of 800 quality responses—approximately one-third of all staff—to form a representative sample of staff serving children ages 0-5.

While we were particularly interested in gaining insights into the workforce serving infants and toddlers (ages 0-3), it is difficult to isolate providers who serve only these ages. Many providers also operate Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) classrooms for children ages 3-5 years in the same facilities, or have older children in their care for a variety of reasons.<sup>6</sup> We also included Pre-K directors, teachers and staff in our survey to allow us to compare answers between respondents by ages served.

To incentivize individual participation, each respondent was offered a \$10 gift card immediately upon completion. As an incentive for programs to encourage their

employees to participate, we allowed individual respondents to enter their program into a drawing to win a \$250 gift card. Both incentives were voluntary. The survey was open from October 12, 2016 to December 15, 2016, which included an extension of two weeks to attempt to get more responses. This was a shorter time frame than many comparable efforts.

We invited early childhood professionals who worked in DC to participate by emailing a brief explanation of the survey and the link to the 528 licensed childcare programs that were registered with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), using OSSE’s contact information for each program. In some cases, the same person or contact info was provided for more than one program, whereas other programs had no current contact information. Because we did not have the ability to reach staff directly, we asked the main point of contact—the Director or Owner—to pass the link on for us. We also shared the link on Twitter and the DC Appleseed website.

In order to deepen our outreach, we attended meetings and events for childcare professionals, such as those hosted by Washington Area Child Care Centers, the Home Providers Network, OSSE, and the Quality Improvement Networks (QINs) to

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<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, “State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates District of Columbia,” May 2016. Available at [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_dc.htm#11-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_dc.htm#11-0000).

<sup>6</sup> While some people use “preschool” to refer to programs for 3-year-olds, and “Pre-Kindergarten” or

“Pre-K” to refer to programs for 4-year-olds, in this paper we use Pre-K to refer to programs that include 3- and/or 4-year-old children. Both 3- and 4-year-olds are included in the District’s “Universal Pre-K Program” (codified in the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008). Where distinctions need to be drawn, we use Pre-K3 and Pre-K4.

raise awareness about the survey. We collected contact information from those who wanted a representative to visit their facility to provide the technology and support to their staff to complete the survey, and followed up afterward to make those arrangements. We offered to visit programs at whatever time best suited them, including outside of business hours, to facilitate survey completion. We brought paper sign-up forms so that we could email or text links directly to anyone who requested them. We also sought personal contacts through our own staff and board of directors, and through the Bainum Birth-to-Three Policy Alliance. We posted information on community message boards in case any parents wanted to encourage their child's caregivers to participate, and posted on an early childhood shared resource website for District educators ([www.ecsharedc.org](http://www.ecsharedc.org)).

After this initial outreach, we followed up with each program with which we had not had personal contact at least once by phone and/or email. We partnered with students at The George Washington University's Human Services and Social Justice Program to assist us in making these contacts. If requested, we brought electronic devices to all programs or events for individuals to use to take the survey.

## B. Limitations

Recognizing the limitations of self-reported data, we initially planned to gather data on the ECE workforce from external sources, rather than through a survey. We explored the possibility of using data from, among

other sources, the District's unemployment insurance program, which could have provided wage and demographic information, or from OSSE's license and subsidy program compliance records. However, we found that it would be difficult to obtain this data due to privacy restrictions, or that the data were incomplete, or were in a form that did not lend itself to analysis. Even if these data were workable, they would still provide only a limited snapshot of workforce characteristics. Moreover, in discussing strategy with the Birth-to-Three Policy Alliance, we determined that a survey, despite its own drawbacks, would be a better approach.

There were several limitations to the survey approach that must be identified, the primary one being access to the classroom-level staff (i.e., teachers and assistants). The most significant difficulty in this process was the lack of information about the ECE workforce needed to target the survey. As noted, we could not determine with precision what a representative sample would look like beyond broad estimates. Therefore, our strategy was to engage as many respondents as possible and conduct ad hoc analysis to determine where additional outreach was necessary. It was challenging to engage potential participants because the only contact information available for programs was the list of licensees with incomplete contact information. We had to depend on program directors to engage their employees directly. We had no way to reach the classroom staff directly through our electronic methods, and had to rely on in-person outreach, such as attending meetings of groups like

Washington Area Child Care Centers, which tended to reach directors and owners, rather than teachers (except in the case of the home providers).

As a result of these limitations, it was easier to engage programs that were already involved in initiatives to improve early childhood education, such as the Quality Improvement Network. This may have been because they had meetings and events already planned in which we could participate, or because they had stronger internal communications and relationships between administrators and teachers. Given the easier access to these providers, it is likely that our sample includes many who are better paid, more aware of systemic issues in the early childhood education system and of professional development opportunities, and/or more invested in remaining in the field. In addition, our efforts to maximize participation may have come at the expense of quality responses. We knew there was potential for such an issue, given the public link, confidentiality, and gift card incentive. We decided, however, that on balance, these were reasonable tradeoffs for maximizing participation.

We also gained anecdotal insight into the survey's limits from our visits to programs. We found that we gathered the most responses in programs where management actively encouraged teachers to participate. When it was clear that management had explained to teachers who we were and the purpose of the survey, the teachers were more interested in participating. We also found that some survey questions took more

time than teachers had available to answer fully, even with our team available for support.

It is also possible that there were issues with the design of the survey, the way the purpose was described, or our general goals in collecting information that made the project unattractive or uninteresting to potential participants. However, we did not receive any feedback identifying such problems.

Finally, some topics were difficult to ask about in a way that captured their complexity, given both the inherent limitations of the survey instrument and the need to keep the survey within reasonable time limits. One of those topics was workplace benefits. While some benefit questions are straightforward (e.g., do you get paid time off?), others are more complicated. These include benefits that an employer might offer and a particular employee doesn't use and so may not know about (e.g., discounts to on-site care for your own children) and others that an employer might offer but which require employee contributions. Responses to questions about benefits indicated that many employees do not know what benefits are available to them.

### C. Responses

While there is no accounting for exactly how many people work in ECE in the District at this point in time, it is estimated to be 2,250. Our goal was to receive 800 survey responses. We actually received 549 responses – a large number, but fewer than our goal. Of those, 184 were only partially

completed; the bulk of those partial responses dropped off the survey on the third page of the survey, which addressed personal and demographic information. Six responses were disqualified by logic filters internal to the survey. After filtering out partial or disqualified responses, we had a total of 359 completed surveys. This final pool for analysis represents about 15% of the estimated workforce.

Due to this low response rate and issues with representativeness described above, we do not feel confident enough in the responses about some quantitative data, such as wages, to publish them here. Because our goal is to inform policy recommendations, we have concluded that we would need a more reliable, significant, and/or representative sample on which to make valid conclusions about financial measures and wage goals. However, the issue of fair and sustainable wages for the ECE workforce remains a primary concern. We hope that future or complementary research can overcome the barriers we encountered to derive accurate snapshots about wages, including what is currently made (on average, and in a range) versus what is required and/or fair. To that end, we have shared some of our lessons learned below.

#### D. Lessons Learned

In terms of the content, we based our survey on similar efforts undertaken in other jurisdictions. Indeed, we framed certain questions such that they could be compared across jurisdictions and with national data. Our outreach effort differed, though, based on unique conditions in the District, and the

position of both DC Appleseed and the Bainum Family Foundation as external stakeholders relative to the childcare industry. As such, we learned lessons that are worth sharing for future research.

1. Use multiple modalities, as many as viable, and be prepared with hands-on support.

Based on data indicating that 95% of Americans have a cell phone, including 77% with a smartphone, and assuming that most child care programs have at least one desktop computer for business purposes, we assumed that most of our target audience had access to at least one device on which they could complete a survey. In the District, public libraries also have readily accessible desktop computers. Therefore, we chose to administer our survey via an electronic platform that was accessible from mobile devices and tablets as well as laptops and desktops. It could be accessed online, or it could be set in “kiosk mode” so that multiple individuals could complete the survey on the same device without requiring internet access. In addition to access, this format meant that data could be quickly and easily compiled and analyzed, and we could devote our personnel resources to outreach rather than data entry.

While individuals may have had access, we were surprised to learn how many individuals had difficulty completing an online touchscreen survey, even one in which all questions were multiple choice or required simple text-based responses. As a result, we were less efficient in collecting responses than we anticipated.

While the electronic platform added value, we might have gained participation from others – perhaps those less comfortable with technology or more sensitive to sharing personal information online – had we offered a paper version, or given the option of an interview. On the other hand, this would have slowed the process significantly.

## 2. Don't separate worker from workplace.

We chose to promise complete anonymity to respondents, rather than linking respondents to a specific facility. We did this for two reasons: 1) In our research over the last several years, we have heard about mistrust between some providers and the government agencies responsible for funding and oversight, and 2) we did not want staff nor the directors they worked for to be concerned about shared information reflecting poorly on them. While there is useful information to be gained about individuals, and anonymity is helpful to overcome mistrust, the data already available about the early childhood system are primarily facility-based: for example, whether the center was a member of the QIN, or participated in the subsidy program, or the economic profile of the neighborhood. Without the facility information, the data are simply less useful because they cannot be measured against existing data. This was especially problematic when trying to determine the representativeness of our responses.

## 3. Relationships and trust are essential to access.

We were able to reach the number of teachers and staff that we did due to the generosity of providers, group leaders, fellow advocates, and the respondents themselves. Once we were able to connect and explain our project, people were generally very open and supportive. Our experience reinforces how important it is to build trust with a community in order to successfully collect data from them and about them. We wanted to honor these relationships and build trust. However, as noted above, the potential for mistrust made anonymity both necessary and counterproductive.

## IV. Results: Profile of Survey Respondents

While our survey results are not generalizable to the entire early care and education workforce in the District, we believe these results do provide a valuable snapshot of the experiences and needs of a portion of the District's providers and teachers. We note that the responses over-represent workers involved in centers, participants in the Quality Improvement Networks, and those located in the Northwest quadrant of the city. Until another survey can better reach workers, this provides policymakers with important insights they have heretofore been unable to collect beyond individual conversations. All data was collected between October 12 and December 15, 2016.

While the survey data we collected do provide more detail than is presented here, we present key results and cross-sections selectively, where we judge such a break-out to be meaningful and instructional and/or when the numbers of responses and nature of the question allowed.

## A. Demographics

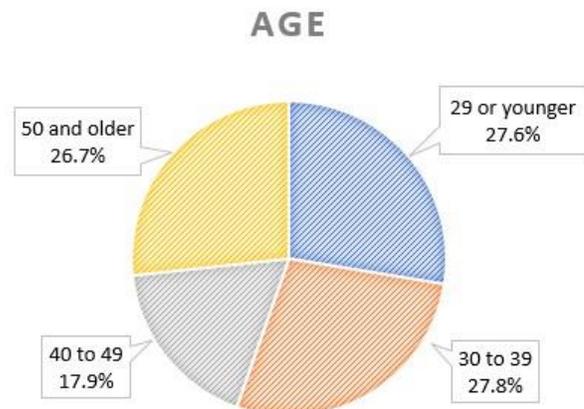
### 1. Gender

Our sample was 91.6% female and 8.4% male. Nationally, women make up 94.4% of childcare workers.<sup>7</sup> Males are represented disproportionately in our sample from Pre-K settings (55.5% male). Females had higher reported rates as administrators (18%) and infant/toddler teachers (43.7%) than males (7.4% were administrators and 14.8% were infant/toddler teachers).

### 2. Age

The age distribution of our sample is as follows: 27.6% were 29 or younger; 27.8% were between 30 and 39; 17.9% were between 40 and 49; and 26.7% were 50 and older, including 3.1% who were 65 years or older. In age, the sample aligns with the national center-based workforce, just under half of which are 30–49 years old, 28% are up to 29 years, and 26% are 50 years and over. In licensed homes nationally, only 4% are 29 years or younger, 55% are 30–49 years, and 41% are 50 years or older.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 1. Age of Survey Respondents, 2016



### 3. Location of Program

More than half of our center sample worked in Northwest DC (58.2%), 23.5% worked in Northeast, 16.3% worked in Southeast, and 3.6% worked in Southwest. (Totals add up to greater than 100% because some respondents worked in multiple locations.) Likewise, more than half of respondents from homes worked in Northwest (52.9%), 33.3% in Southeast, 21.6% in Northeast, and

<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey 2016." Available at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at University of California, Berkeley, "Early Childhood

Workforce Index 2016," p. 7. Available at <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2016.pdf>.

Figure 2: Location of Programs (Centers) of Survey Respondents, 2016

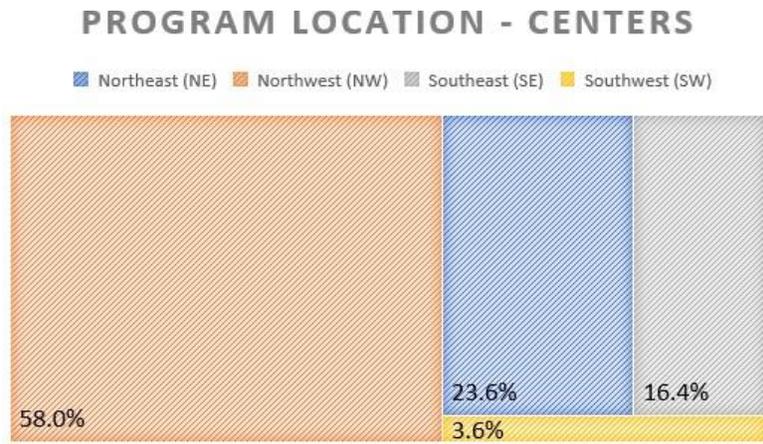
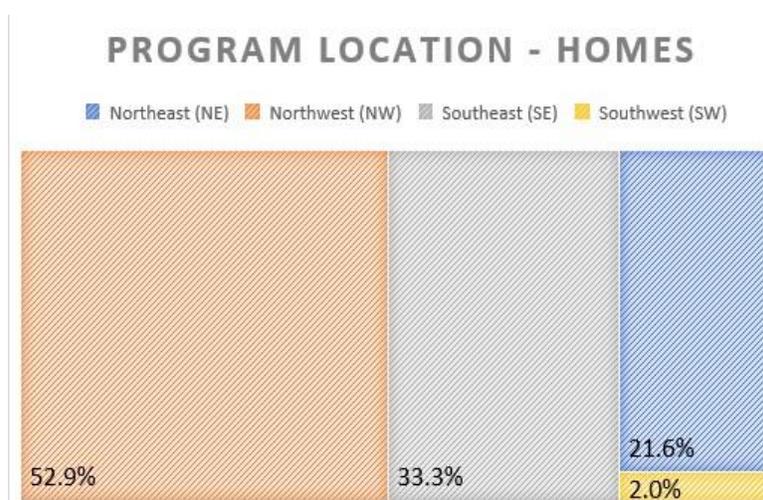


Figure 3: Location of Programs (Centers) of Survey Respondents, 2016



2.0% in Southwest. Overall, approximately 50% of the District’s licensed child care capacity works in Northwest, so our sample somewhat over-represents that quadrant.

#### 4. Location of Residence

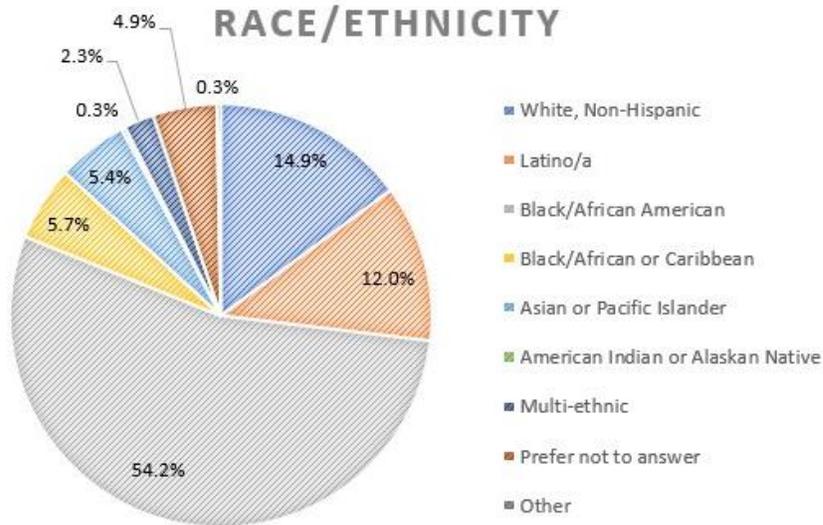
We asked respondents where they resided. Two-thirds lived in the District (65.5%); 16.4% in Northeast DC, 21.2% in Southeast DC, 25.1% in Northwest DC, and 2.8% in Southwest DC. The rest of survey responded lived in Maryland (29.9%), Virginia (2.9%), or did not specify (2%). Most of the respondents from Maryland resided in Prince George’s County, a group that made

up 19.5% of the entire sample, while 7% lived in Montgomery County and another 3.4% lived elsewhere in Maryland. Of the 2.9% of respondents who lived in Virginia, about half lived in Fairfax County, while the other half lived in Arlington County, Alexandria, Loudoun County, or Prince William County.

#### 5. Commute Time

Commuting is known to affect job satisfaction and retention. Most respondents had a commute of 0–30 minutes each way (52.7%), but a significant portion had longer commutes each way of 31–60 minutes

Figure 4: Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents, 2016



(34.8%), 61–90 minutes (10.0%), and more than 90 minutes (2.6%).

## 6. Race/Ethnicity

In our sample, most respondents were Black/African American (54.0%), followed by White, Non-Hispanic (14.9%), Latino/a (12.3%), Black/African or Caribbean (6%), Asian or Pacific Islander (5.4%), Multi-ethnic (2.3%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.3%). 4.9% preferred not to answer. These figures differ somewhat from the population of the District, which is 47% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 36% White, and is most divergent in the lower proportion of white individuals. (Note, our survey categories differed in that we listed Latino/a as a category rather than Hispanic.) In the United States overall, which is 61% White non-Hispanic, 12% Black and 18%

Hispanic,<sup>9</sup> 63% of the child care workforce is White, while 17% and 16% are African American in centers and homes, respectively, and Hispanic staff make up 14% of workers in centers and 16% in homes.<sup>10</sup> Whereas the District child care workforce is disproportionately Black with a notable underrepresentation of White workers, the national workforce on mirrors the demographics of the national population.

## 7. Language

We asked what languages respondents used or spoke fluently. English was spoken by 89.4% of respondents, and Spanish by 15.9%. Other languages were spoken by less than 5% of respondents: American Sign Language (ASL) (4.2%), French (3.9%), Tagalog (3.3%), Amharic/Ethiopian (2.5%), German (0.8%), Italian (0.6%), Vietnamese

<sup>9</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts: Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity, March 2016. Available at <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22nested%22:%7B%22district-of-columbia%22:%7B%7D%7D,%22wrapups%22:%7B%22united-states%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

[columbia%22:%7B%7D%7D,%22wrapups%22:%7B%22united-states%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D](http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22nested%22:%7B%22district-of-columbia%22:%7B%7D%7D,%22wrapups%22:%7B%22united-states%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D)

<sup>10</sup> Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016, p. 8.

(0.6%), and 3.1% spoke another language not listed. This question did not designate native language, as we allowed respondents to check more than one spoken language. Most people spoke only one language (78%), while 17.5% spoke two languages, 3.1% spoke three, 1.1% spoke four, and one person spoke five. In our sample, 5.8% reported that there were not enough professional development courses available in their primary language.

### 8. Home Life

Among respondents, 46.7% were single, 36.1% were married, 9.5% were divorced, separated or widowed, and 7.7% were in a partnership. A small proportion of respondents (11.7%) had responsibilities caring for an adult family member at home. About two-fifths (41.8%) cared for minor children at home; about 80% of these had at least one child under five years old at home.

## B. Current and Past ECE Employment

### 1. Setting

Of our sample, 16.4% worked in a child development home and 83.6% worked in a child development center. A variety of types of centers were represented; a majority worked in non-profit community-based ECE centers (43.6%), followed by for-profit community-based ECE centers (18.1%), and private school-based ECE centers (14.8%). The remaining 23.5% worked in centers that were faith-based, corporate (sponsored by businesses to serve employees), public school-based, federal, and “other.” Nearly 60% of participants came from small to medium-sized centers (licensed to serve up to 99 children), with just over one-quarter

(27.5%) serving fewer than 50. Except for about 5% who did not know the size, the remainder worked in centers serving 100-149 children (18.8%), and 149 and above (17.8%).

Figure 3: Workplace Type, of Survey Respondents, 2016



### 2. Position

We received a relatively even distribution of responses across roles. The proportion of the center sample directly teaching infants and toddlers (0–2-year-olds) was 41.3%. The specific breakdown was as follows: Administrator/Director (18.8%), Lead Teacher (0–2-year-olds) (20.8%), Lead Teacher (3–5-year-olds) (11.4%), Assistant Teacher (0–2-year-olds) (20.5%), Assistant Teacher (3–5-year-olds) (13.1%), Classroom Floater/Substitute (5.4%), and Teacher (other ages/unknown role/other role) (3.4%). We also received responses from a small number of individuals who contribute to classroom teaching but do not staff the classrooms themselves: Specialist (Compliance Manager, Health Coordinator, etc.) (3%), and Mentor/Coach/Instructor to

Figure 5: Primary Role (in Centers) of Survey Respondents, 2016

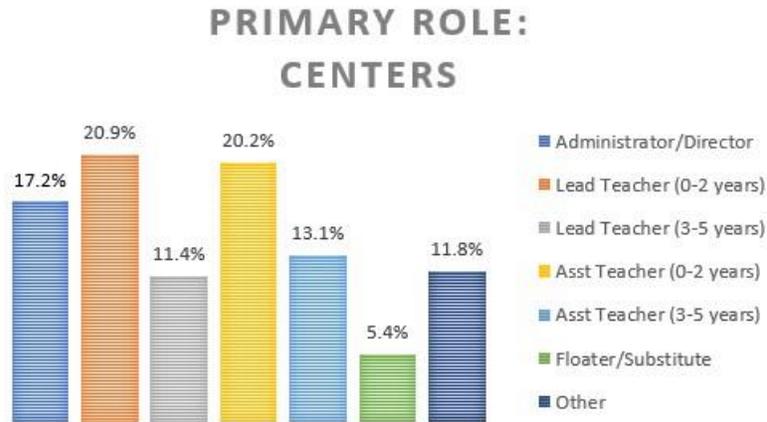
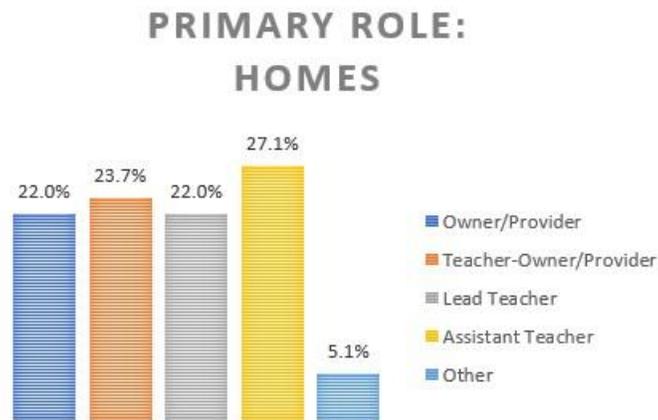


Figure 4: Primary Role (in Homes) of Survey Respondents, 2016



Teachers (1.7%). A very small number of non-classroom staff also responded.

The majority of respondents working in homes were the owners/providers themselves, while about half of owners also served in a teaching role. The breakdown of respondent roles included: Owner/Provider (22.0%), Teacher-Owner/Provider (23.7%), Lead Teacher (22.0%), and Assistant Teacher (28.8%). Only 3.5% of respondents who worked in child development homes held non-teaching positions.

### 3. Ages Cared For

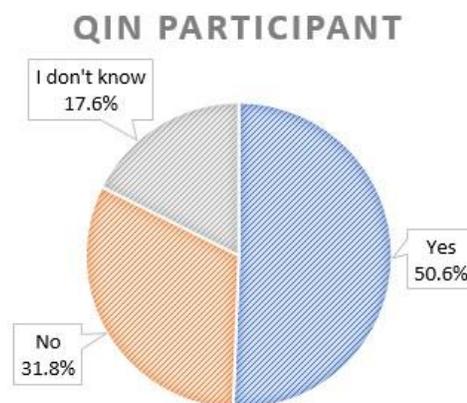
The vast majority of respondents worked at centers that served infants and toddlers (94.9%); only 5.1% did not. The majority of home providers also served 0–2-year-olds: 52.5% currently had at least one infant under 12 months, 55.9% had at least one child 12–23 months, and 54.2% served a 24–35-month-old. (Respondents may have had all three ages represented.) There were also older children in their care: 42.4% served 3-year-olds, 22.0% had 4-year-olds, 13.6% had 5-year-olds, and a small percent of respondents (5.1%) worked in homes that served children 6 years or older.

#### 4. QIN Participation

Quality Improvement Networks (QINs) are part of an effort by the District to help more child development programs that are serving the District’s lowest income children to reach the high quality and program standards of Early Head Start. In these networks, a high-quality program “Hub” provides professional development, coaching, consultation, and access to specialized services for a selected group of infant-toddler providers. There are three QIN Hubs in the District, supporting 14 Child Development Centers (serving approximately 800 children) and 12 Child Development Homes (serving approximately 65 children). This is a small number out of approximately 218 centers that participate in the subsidy program, of which 96 are at a sufficient quality level to be eligible for QIN participation.

In this survey, half of all respondents from both centers and homes participated in the Quality Improvement Networks (50.4%). 31.8% did not, and 17.8% did not know if their program participated. We assume these latter would be among those who did not participate in the QIN, since QIN participation requires robust staff engagement, or were newer to the field and/or to their current employer. This suggests that the sample over-represents participants in the QIN programs, compared to programs as a whole.

Figure 8: Participation of Programs in Quality Improvement Networks, of Survey Respondents, 2016

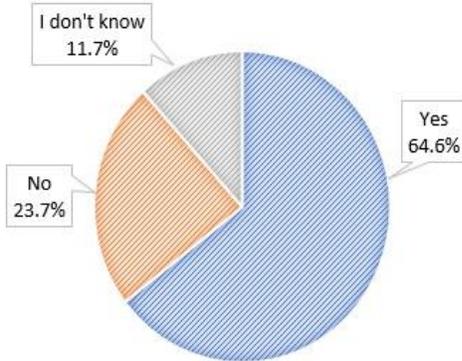


#### 5. Child Care Subsidy Program Participation

An estimated 58% (280 out of 484) of licensed child development facilities (centers and homes) participate in the subsidy program in the District. This means that they have a contract with the District government to accept government reimbursement payments on behalf of low-income children in their care. About two-thirds of respondents worked at centers or homes that participated in the child care subsidy program for low-income families (64.3%); 23.7% worked in facilities that do not participate in the subsidy program; and 12% did not know whether their program participated. Those who did not know about the subsidy program in their facility were newer to the field than the average respondent. This suggests that the sample also over-represents participants in the subsidy program.

Figure 9: Participation of Programs in DC Child Care Subsidy Program, of Survey Respondents, 2016

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM



### 6. Hours Worked

Most respondents from centers and homes worked full-time (35 hours per week or more) (82.7%), with answers ranging up to 55 hours worked per week. 17.3% worked part-time (0-34 hours per week).

Respondents who reported working at a center or home that participated in the subsidy program were the most likely group to work full-time, with 87.2% reporting that they worked 35 hours per week or more. Nationwide, 74% of center teachers and 85% of home-based teachers work full-time.<sup>11</sup>

## C. Compensation and Benefits

### 1. Wage or Salary

We asked respondents about their wage or salary. However, as discussed above, we are not confident that the sample of survey

<sup>11</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, "Number and Characteristics of Early Care and Education (ECE) Teachers and Caregivers: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)," October 2013. p. 20. Available at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece\\_wf\\_brief\\_102913\\_0.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nsece_wf_brief_102913_0.pdf).

respondents accurately represent the field and, therefore, we are unable to present an analysis of the reported compensation. According to a joint report by the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services from June 2016, however, wages in the field are strongly demarcated by both age of children and location of program. Those working with infants and toddlers, for example, earn on average about 70% of those working with 3-5 year olds. Early educators working in private community-based programs earn the lowest wages, while those working in public schools earn the highest. And those working in publicly-funded prekindergarten, regardless of location, earn less than those teaching kindergarten, first grade, and up.<sup>12</sup>

### 2. Benefits

We asked respondents to complete a grid regarding the benefits offered by their employer, and whether they participated in the benefit. However, based on responses received and observations by DC Appleseed staff when assisting with surveys in-person, the grid format was confusing for respondents. The result was that many respondents answered only part of the question. Therefore, we will focus here only on the particular benefits reportedly offered

<sup>12</sup> Joint Report of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Education, "High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High-Quality Workforce: Low Compensation Undermines Quality," June 2016. Available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>.

rather than the participation rates or the reasons for lack of participation.

The most commonly offered benefit was paid professional development days, followed by paid time off for illness or vacation. Less commonly offered were, in descending order, health insurance, a retirement plan, temporary or permanent disability insurance, and scholarships or contributions for educational expenses. The answers for employees of centers and homes were very similar as far as most commonly and least commonly offered benefits.

Notably, there was a high proportion of responses of “I don’t know” in the benefits portion. For example, while 122 people said their employer offered disability insurance and 85 said it was not offered, 53 people did not know. While it is possible that some of the “I don’t know” responses are due to the question format, it is also possible that many employees are unaware of the benefits available to them, which is a relatively easy problem to address.

#### D. Educational Attainment

##### 1. Education level

Most respondents to the survey had at least some college (78.3%), though many will need to increase their educational attainment in order to retain their jobs under the new District licensing requirements. The breakdown of respondent education levels across all settings and positions was as follows: less than high school (1.4%), high school or equivalent (e.g., GED or secondary program outside the US) (17.8%), trade/technical school (2.5%), some college,

no degree (21.2%), associate degree (15.3%), bachelor's degree (21.8%), some post-graduate, no advanced degree (4.8%), master's degree (13.0%), doctorate (1.1%), and another professional degree (e.g., RN, JD, MD) (1.1%).

Looking at education level by position, we see a much higher proportion of administrators and directors with bachelor’s degrees or higher than among teachers. We also saw a gap of nearly 30% in attainment of an associate degree or higher between assistant infant/toddler teachers and lead infant/toddler teachers. Teachers working with 3-5 year olds were more likely to have degrees than their infant/toddler teacher counterparts.

Of Administrators/Directors, no respondents reported that their highest education level was less than high school, 2% reported it was high school or equivalent, 2% trade/technical school, 5.9% some college, 13.7% an associate degree, 23.5% a bachelor's degree, 11.8% some post-graduate, 31.4% a master's degree, 5.9% doctorate, and 3.9% a professional degree. From this distribution, nearly one-quarter (23.6%) of Administrators/Directors in our sample will need to increase their educational attainment by 2020 in order to reach the level required by licensing regulations.

Of Lead Teachers of infants and toddlers, 1.6% reported that their highest education level was less than high school, 21% reported a high school diploma or

Figure 10: Education Level of Staff (Centers), of Survey Respondents, 2016

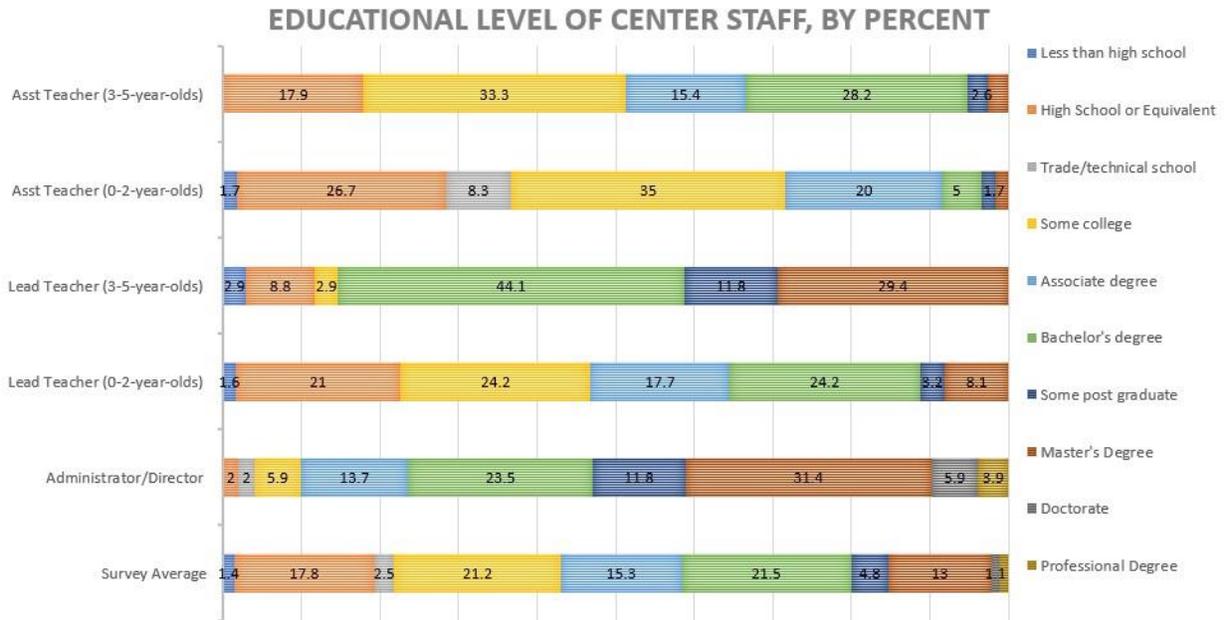
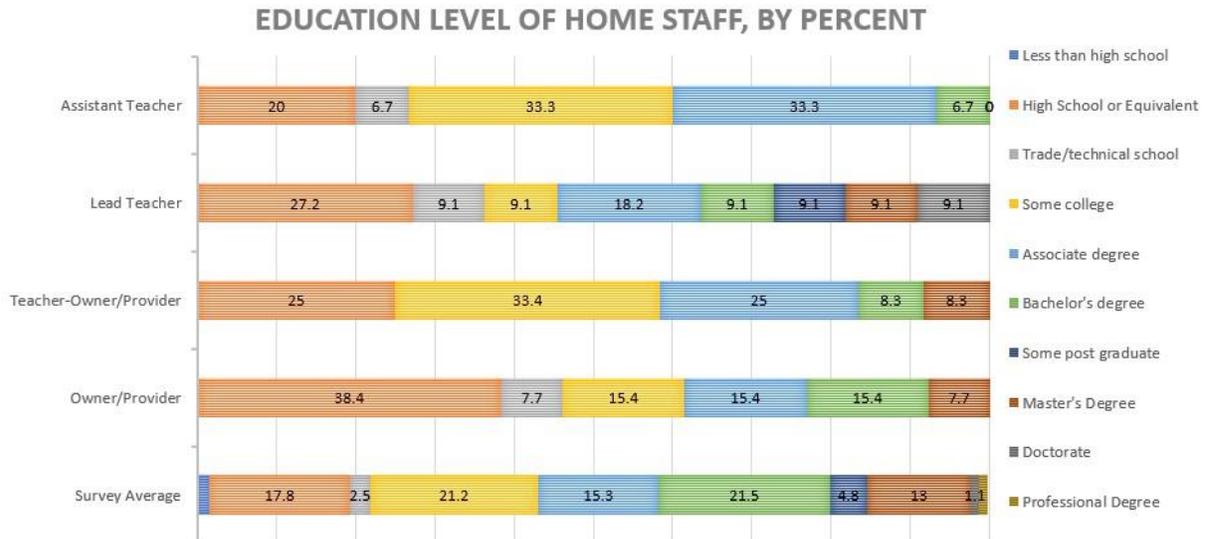


Figure 11: Education Level of Staff (Homes), of Survey Respondents, 2016



equivalent, 24.2% some college, 17.7% had an associate degree, 24.2% had a bachelor's degree, 3.2% had some post-graduate, 8.1% had a master's degree, and none of our respondents in this category had a doctorate or professional degree. Overall, 46.8% had less than an associate degree, the degree that will be required by new licensing regulations.

Among those teaching 3-5 year olds, 2.9% of Lead Teachers had an educational level less than high school, 8.8% had high school diploma or equivalent, 2.9% had some college, none had an associate degree, 44.1% had a bachelor's degree, 11.8% had some post-graduate, 29.4% had a master's degree, and none had a doctorate or professional degree. The higher levels of

attainment, when compared to Lead Teachers of 0–2 year olds, could be anticipated because of requirements for Pre-K programs in public schools and community-based organizations with Pre-K Expansion Grant funding that Pre-K Lead Teachers have bachelor's degrees. Of Assistant Teachers of 3–5 year olds, none reported having less than high school, 17.9% had high school or equivalent, 0% had trade/technical school, 33.3% had some college, 15.4% had an associate degree, 28.2% had a bachelor's degree, 2.6% had some post graduate, 2.6% had a master's degree, and none had a doctorate or professional degree. This is a lower proportion with a bachelor's degree or higher than the Lead Teachers of the same age group, and is a similar distribution to Lead Teachers of 0–2 year olds.

Respondents from QIN-associated programs reported a lower average level of degree attainment than programs outside of the network and slightly lower than the overall survey average. The proportion of QIN-associated respondents with less than high school was 2.2%; high school diploma or equivalent, 22.7%; trade/technical school, 3.3%; some college, 23.2%; associate degree, 16.6%; bachelor's degree, 19.3%; some post-graduate, 4.4%; master's degree, 7.2%; doctorate, 0.6%; and professional degree, 0.6%. As discussed in a following section, QIN programs aim to meet Early Head Start standards which require all classroom staff to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, and the CDA attainment level of QIN

participants is notably higher than other groups of respondents.

Reported education levels were similar between respondents who participated in the subsidy program and those who did not or did not know if their program served the subsidy program.

In the U.S. overall, center-based teaching staff have the following education levels: about 1% did not complete high school, 18% have a high school degree or equivalent, 28% have some college, 17% have an associate degree, and 35% have a bachelor's degree or higher. For staff in licensed homes across the country, about 5% did not complete high school, 29% have a high school degree or equivalent, 34% have some college, 16% have an associate degree and 15% have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>13</sup> Therefore our survey had similar results to national data.

#### *a) Area of study*

Of those who completed a degree, over 85% have a degree in a field related to early childhood care and education with the largest number concentrated in Early Childhood Education (48.2%) Child Development (22.3%) and Elementary Education (18.3%). Other majors included: Administration of Child Care Programs (5.1%), Curriculum Development (3.0%), Family Studies (2.5%), Nursing (2.5%), Psychology (10.7%), Social Work (4.6%), and Special Education (4.6%). (Respondents could report more than one major.)

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<sup>13</sup> Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016, p. 7.

*b) Scholarships*

We asked respondents with a bachelor's degree, "If scholarships were available to get a master's in ECE, how likely is it that you would be interested?" 82% who answered this question responded that they would be very likely or somewhat likely to be interested, with nearly 70% indicating they would very likely be interested. Only 10.9% were somewhat unlikely to be interested, and 6.5% were very unlikely to be interested in scholarships to pursue a master's degree in ECE. We asked a similar question of those who reported having an associate degree about scholarships to get a bachelor's degree. Again, most were very likely to be interested (65.4%) and 21.2% were somewhat likely.

The interest in master's degree is significant and should be considered as part of the District's investment in building the local pipeline of teachers. Without master's and doctorate degree holders, the expertise necessary to provide post-secondary ECE education locally will be limited. Also, since scholarships to get a bachelor's degree are currently available through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood program and elsewhere, it would be valuable to know more about why so many with such high levels of interest are not taking advantage of the existing opportunities. Perhaps information about the scholarships is not reaching all eligible teachers and/or the scholarship programs that are available are not meeting the needs or expectations of potential users.

*c) Incomplete degrees*

For those who reported having some college or some graduate school, we asked why their degree was incomplete. The degree was still in process for 39.3% who were actively working toward it, while another 33.7% had to leave school due to financial strain. Another 11.2% reported personal or family crises, and 7.9% had encountered a work-school scheduling conflict. Others reported that they never planned to complete the degree (1.1%), did not have adequate child care (1.1%), or other reasons (5.6%).

Most who had started a degree had an interest in returning to school: 73.7% were interested, and 15.8% responded "maybe." Only 10.5% with an incomplete degree were not interested in returning.

We asked those who had not completed a degree but wanted or might want to return, as well as those with associate degrees who may want or need to get a bachelor's, what kind of support would be important for them in returning to school. Most answered that money for tuition and books, and time off from work would be very or somewhat important. Relief from home caregiving duties and transportation assistance were cited, and a smaller share of participants indicated tutoring and access to technology as needed supports.

*d) Required to Complete Degree*

For those who reported an education level less than a completed bachelor's degree, as well as those who had some post-graduate

school but not a complete master’s degree, we asked: “Are you required to complete your diploma or degree program, or get a more advanced degree in order to remain qualified for your position?” A full half (50.7%) said that they were required to complete a higher degree, 36.9% were not, and 12.4% did not know. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, nearly one-quarter of administrators/directors and 46.8% of lead infant/toddler teachers held less than the soon-to-be required level of education.

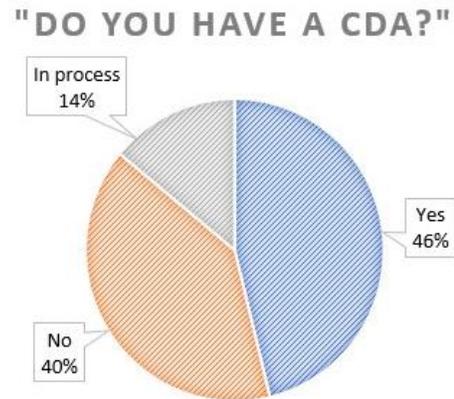
## 2. CDA and Teacher Certifications

Nearly half of all respondents (across positions, in centers and homes) had completed their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, and another 14.2% were in the process. 39.7% reported that they did not have a CDA.

While members of QINs reported lower levels of education (above), they were much more likely to have a CDA than the survey average (57.9%), and much more likely to have a CDA than those who were not part of a QIN (31.4%) or did not know if they were part of a QIN (37.7%). As described above, QIN participants require classroom staff to obtain a CDA in line with Early Head Start standards.

Respondents who worked in facilities that participated in the subsidy program were also more likely to have a CDA than those who did not or did not know if their facility participated in the subsidy program. Within the subsidy program, 51.5% have a CDA, while another 13.2% were in the process. For those who did not work with the subsidy

Figure 12: Child Development Associate credential attainment, of Survey Respondents, 2016



program, 32.9% had the CDA, and 10.5% were in process. Among respondents who did not know whether their facility participated in the subsidy program, 41.5% have a CDA and 24.4% were in process.

Additionally, 21.2% of respondents with a bachelor’s degree or higher in our sample also had a Teacher Certification in DC, and 11% had a Teacher Certification from another state. 11.6% had a Teacher Certification from a country other than the U.S. 6.8% held a Special Education Teacher Certification from DC, and 2.1% held a Special Education Teacher Certification from another state. Among respondents, 61.6% reported no teacher certifications.

Nearly a third (31%) of respondents from the QINs with a bachelor’s degree or higher had a Teacher Certification in DC This is notably higher than those who were not a QIN member (15%) or those who did not know if their program was part of a QIN (14.8%); the latter more frequently held a certification from another state or country other than DC

Participants in the subsidy program reported more certifications than those who did not participate, in particular the DC Teacher Certification (23.1% versus 17.1%), teacher certifications from another country (15.4% versus 5.7%), and special education teacher certifications from DC or another state (12.1% versus 0%). Those who did not know whether their facility participated in the subsidy program had similar rates of attainment generally, with an especially large group having teaching certificates from other states (26.3%, compared with 7.7% confirmed in the subsidy program and 11.4% not in the subsidy program.)

## E. Economic Security

### 1. Worry about Expenses

Drawing on work by the University of California-Berkeley's Center for the Study of Child Care Employment,<sup>14</sup> our survey asked "Do you ever worry about having enough money to cover your expenses?" More than three-quarters (76.9%) reported that they did worry about their expenses. The most frequent cause of worry was retirement; 91% of respondents "sometimes" or "often" worried about having enough savings for retirement. The second most frequent source of worry was having enough money to pay monthly bills; 50% "often" worried about the month's bills, and less than 2% said this was "never" a source of worry. Eighty-five percent of respondents "often" or "sometimes" worried about

housing expenses. Healthcare, food, and transportation costs were relatively less concerning—perhaps because of access to public assistance for some of these. Even then, these necessities reportedly caused worry for most respondents at some point; the percentage who "never" worried about these expenses never exceeded 18% of our sample.

Of Directors/Administrators that responded to the survey, 62.7% answered that they ever worried about their expenses, while 80-87% of respondents in other teaching positions did.

Whether respondents worked in a facility in the subsidy program seemed to impact whether they worried about expenses; 80.5% of those who worked within the subsidy program worried about expenses, versus only 67.1% whose center or home did not participate in the subsidy program. Among those who did not know if their program worked with subsidized families, 76.2% reported worry, which matches the overall average. Further, respondents whose programs were part of the QIN reported worrying about expenses more than the average; 83.4% did, versus 66.7% who did not work within the QIN. These differences may warrant further inquiry, since high levels of stress among educators could impact children in their care, many of whom already experience toxic stress due to poverty and other family circumstances.

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<sup>14</sup> The questions come from the Adult Well-Being domain of the Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning (SEQUAL) tool, created by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

Used with permission of CSCCE. For more information, visit <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/sequal/>.

One national 2013 study out of University of California-Berkeley found that nearly three-quarters of ECE teaching staff worried about meeting monthly expenses and paying their bills. And almost half experienced food insecurity.<sup>15</sup> Our results corroborate these findings.

## 2. Public Program Participation

Due to the general low wages for the ECE workforce, we asked in which public benefit programs respondents participated. This question is a proxy measure for poverty, as eligibility for most programs are means-tested. Nearly half (47.4%) of the sample indicated that they rely on one or more public programs to supplement their income or access essential services: 19.8% were enrolled in Medicaid; and 12.5% used Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or “food stamps”), though given the fact that uptake rates for those eligible but not participating in SNAP are higher among the working poor, it’s possible that more are eligible for SNAP than actually access it;<sup>16</sup> 10.3% reported being enrolled in Medicare (which is not means tested); 6.1% used Supplemental Nutrition for Women Infants and Children (WIC); 1.1% currently used Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); 6.1% used a housing subsidy (Section 8, public housing unit, etc.); 6.1% received Social Security Income (SSI) or

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for themselves or a dependent; 10.6% received an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); and 10% were enrolled in the child care subsidy program for their own families. In addition, while not a public benefit per se, we also asked about child support as an income supplement: 7.8% received child support.

Among respondents, the greatest variation in public benefit participation was seen when looking at program location. Only 36.4% of teachers in facilities in Southwest and 44.1% of teachers in Northwest reported public program participation, while 54.2% of teachers in Northeast and 66% in Southeast participated in one or more program. We speculate that Southwest and Northwest have many childcare programs subsidized by federal agencies for their employees or operated by private corporations, and therefore may offer more private benefits like health insurance. However, we also note that the quadrants experiencing lower-than-average rates of worry about expenses have the higher rates of public program participation, which may be more than simple correlation. The source and impact of these differences may warrant further investigation.

More than half (52.8%) of respondents who worked within the subsidy program accessed

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<sup>15</sup> “Those who were parents, those with lower levels of education, and those with lower wages all expressed higher levels of worry, but expressions of economic worry were not restricted to early childhood teachers with only these characteristics.” (Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016, p. 17.)

<sup>16</sup>Cunyngham et al. “Empirical Bayes Shrinkage Estimates of State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates in Fiscal Year 2012 to Fiscal Year 2014 for All Eligible People and Working Poor People,” January 2017. Available at [https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/techpart\\_rate2012-2014.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/techpart_rate2012-2014.pdf).

public programs—higher than the survey average. Those whose facilities were not part of the subsidy program or did not know if their facilities were part of the subsidy program reported much lower levels of participation (37.6% and 35.7% respectively).

Our sample is consistent with the national data regarding public benefits participation. Nationally, 46% of the ECE workforce is enrolled in at least one public support program (such as Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and EITC), compared with 26% of workers in the U.S. population generally.<sup>17</sup> By comparison, according to the 2015 American Community Survey, 35.1% of all District residents were enrolled in public health insurance coverage (though just 12.3% of employed residents were enrolled). About 15% of all District residents received SNAP benefits, and 3.7% received cash assistance.<sup>18</sup> National data also show that only 13% of elementary and middle school teachers participated in public support programs (less than the national average), while 34% of pre-k and kindergarten teachers participated—less than child care workers but higher than the national average. The younger the children they serve, the more teachers use public support services in the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

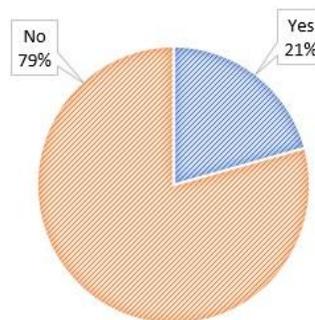
### 3. Additional Jobs

About one-fifth of respondents (20.6%) worked another paid job in addition to their ECE position. Of those who had additional

jobs, 45.7% worked these regularly (e.g., predictable schedule every week or month), and 52.8% worked 10 or more hours per week. Most of these second and third jobs (58.5%) involved another form of early care and education (teaching, babysitting, tutoring); 15.4% were in retail/sales, 13.8% provided a specialized service (personal trainer, therapy, artist, hairstyling), 9.2% were in the health/nursing field, 7.7% provided a kind of domestic service (gardening, dog-sitting, housekeeping), 4.6% were in driving (including ridesharing services like Uber), 3.1% were in administrative roles, 1.5% were in food service, 1.5% were in manufacturing, and 1.5% were in private security.

Figure 13: Working at least one additional job, of Survey Respondents, 2016

#### "DO YOU WORK OTHER JOBS?"



Lead and Assistant Teachers of 3–5-year-olds were both more likely to work additional jobs (35% and 28% respectively) than Leads or Assistants of 0–2-year-olds

<sup>17</sup> Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey: Data Profiles, 2015.

<https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2015/>

<sup>19</sup> Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016, pp. 16-17.

(18% and 17%) or Administrators/Directors (21%). Since some of these may work in classrooms aligned with the public school schedule, it may be that they performed these additional jobs during the summer when schools are closed. Predictably, floaters/substitutes were also more likely than average to work additional jobs (31%).

Fewer employees of the QIN reported working additional jobs (13.8%) than in general. Conversely, those who did not participate in a QIN or did not know if their program was part of QIN were more likely to report working additional jobs (25.4% and 31.7%, respectively). Since QIN respondents reported higher levels of financial worry than average, it is worth considering the reasons behind this difference.

Teachers working in homes and centers in the Southeast quadrant of DC were slightly less likely than average, and less likely than teachers working in other quadrants, to have an additional job to supplement their income (only 16% reported having additional jobs.) Teachers from facilities in Northwest were most likely to work additional jobs (23.2%), while 19.4% of teachers in Northeast and 18.2% of teachers in Southwest had additional jobs.

Fewer respondents who participated in the subsidy program had additional jobs than average (16.5%), whereas 22.4% of those at a facility which did not participate in the subsidy had additional jobs. This could include individuals working in public school settings. Those who did not know if their

facility participated in subsidy represented the biggest outlier in this category, with 40.5% of this group reporting an additional job. (This group also skewed toward fewer years of experience and fewer working full-time than average.)

## F. Professional Goals and Interests

### 1. Professional Development

In our queries about professional development, we asked respondents if there were subjects they would like to learn more about but have not had the opportunity. Nearly three-quarters (73.4%) said this was true or somewhat true. The most commonly cited interests were Special Needs (Inclusion, Autism, etc.) (21.3%), Behavioral/Social-Emotional Management (20.5%), Teaching/Learning Specialties (e.g. reading, STEM, Art) (20.5%), Business Skills/Administration (16.4%), Professional Advancement (leadership, coaching, higher education, etc.) (15.6%), Languages or English as a Second Language (6.6%), and working with adults and families (4.9%).

### 2. How Long Worked in ECE

Of all respondents across settings and positions, more than 72% have been in the field more than five years. Specifically, only 27.8% had worked in ECE fewer than five years, 28.7% had worked in ECE 5–10 years, 14.5% between 11–14 years, and 29% 15 years or more. Because of the limitations of our sample, it is difficult to know how this depth of experience compares to the workforce overall, but considering the high

Figure 14: Years of Experience in Early Care and Education (Centers), of Survey Respondents, 2016

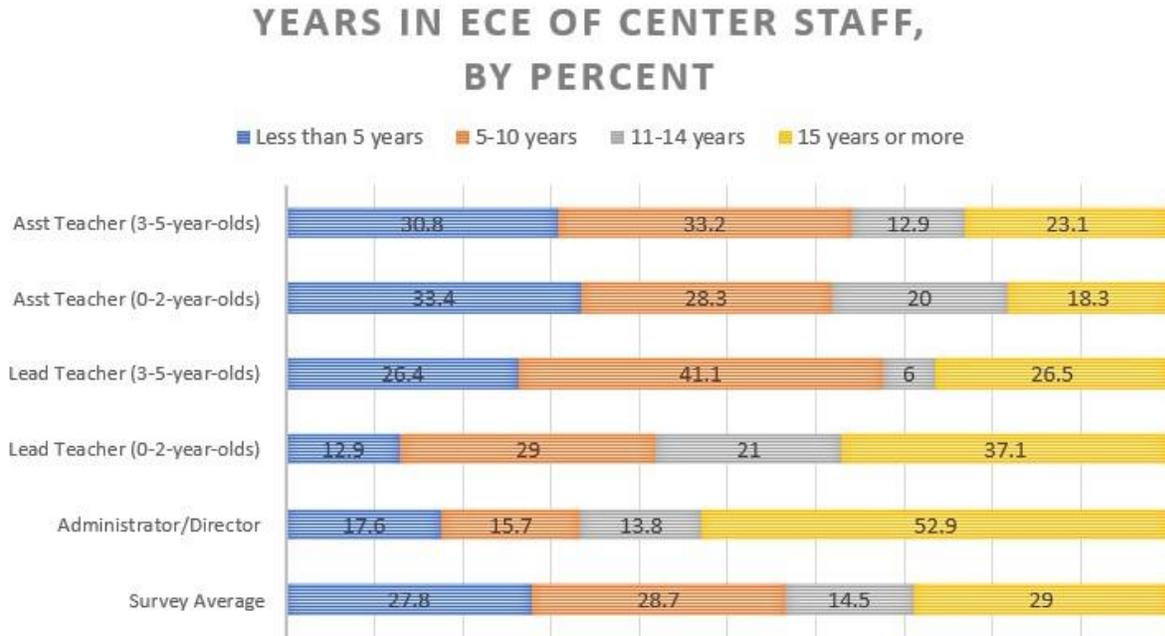
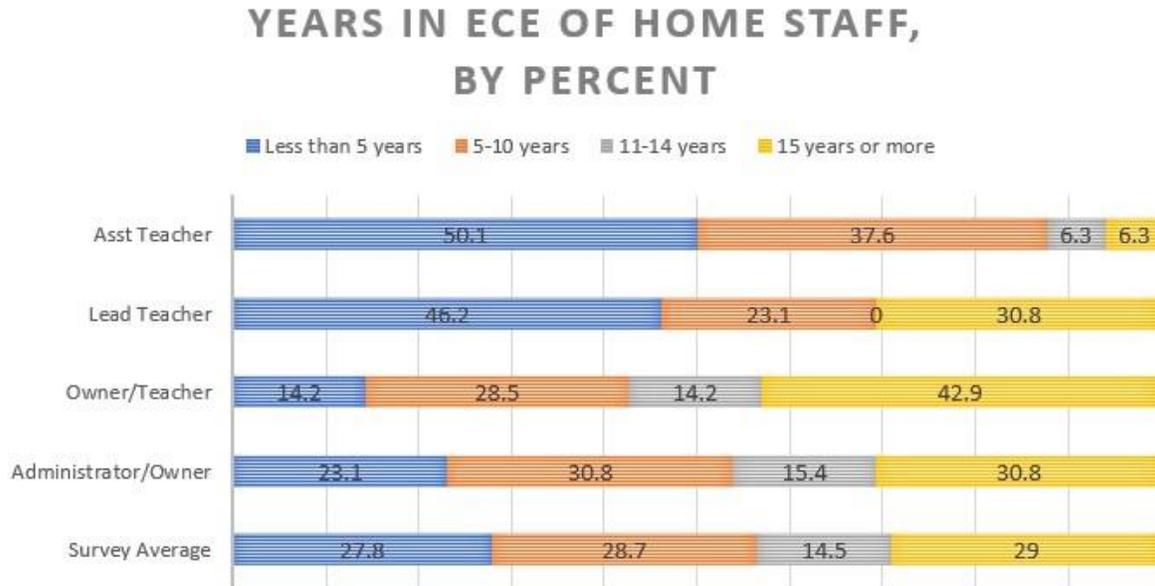


Figure 15: Years of Experience in Early Care and Education (Homes), of Survey Respondents, 2016



levels of turnover anecdotally reported in this field, these numbers are striking.

A high proportion of Administrators/Directors of centers had been in the field 15 years or more (52.9%), and only 17.6% had been in the field less than

five years. Across centers, the years of experience of Lead Teachers of 0–2-year-olds skewed higher than Assistant Teachers of 0–2-year-olds. For 3–5-year-olds, experience was more evenly distributed along the spectrum for both Lead and Assistant Teachers. One notable difference

between positions was that 26.5% of Lead Teachers of 3–5-year-olds had been in the ECE field for 15 years or more, compared to 37.1% of Lead Teachers of 0–2-year-olds.

In homes, Owners who also had teaching duties had the most years of experience; 42.9% had been in ECE for 15 years or more. Nearly half of both Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers in homes had been in the field less than five years, while 30.8% of Lead Teachers but only 6.3% of Assistant Teachers had been in the field 15 years or more.

Though we hoped to analyze years of experience by QIN participation, we had a confounding factor that made that difficult: larger-than-average proportions of those who did not know about QIN participation were new to the field (46.1% had been in ECE fewer than five years). Therefore we were unable to analyze if QIN participation increases retention or attracts more veteran teachers.

There was some variation among teacher experience by neighborhood, but responses generally clustered in line with overall averages. One outlier was among teachers in Southwest, where more than half of teachers (54.6%) had been in the field fewer than five years.

There were similar groupings in experience between participants in the subsidy program and those who did not participate: 25.5% of respondents who worked in facilities that accepted subsidies had been in the field fewer than five years, 30.3% between 5–10

years, 17.8% between 11–14 years, and 26.4% 15 years or more, while 23.5% of non-participating respondents had been in the field fewer than five years, 27.1% had been 5–10 years, 9.5% 11–14 years, and 40% 15 years or more. The group that did not know tended to be new to the field: 47.6% had been working in ECE fewer than five years.

National data suggest that, 16-23% of workers have been in the field less than five years, 21-27% have been in the field 5–10 years, 32–36% have been in the field 10–20 years, and 18-27% have been in the field more than 20 years. While these categories do not align with those from our survey, we can see that our respondents were slightly newer to the field than national averages; 27.8% of respondents from DC have been in the field fewer than five years compared to 16-23% nationally.

### 3. How Long at Current Employer

To get at the issue of turnover in the field and among employers, we asked all respondents how long they had worked for their current employer (unless they owned the business). Almost one-fifth (19.3%) had worked at their current employer for less than one year (as opposed to the 6.3% who were generally new to the field). Among respondents, 19% had worked for their current employer for less than one year, 16.8% had worked at their current employer 1–2 years, 26.6% for 3–4 years (the highest response rate across the board), 9.2% for 5–6 years, and about 5% or less in the intervals of 7–8 years, 9–10 years, 11–12 years and

13–14 years, and 11.6% had been at their current employer for 15 years or more.

For home providers, 40.7% had been providing care in their home for 1–5 years, 25.9% for 6–10 years, 11.1% for 11–15 years, 7.4% for 16–20 years, and 14.8% for 21 years or longer.

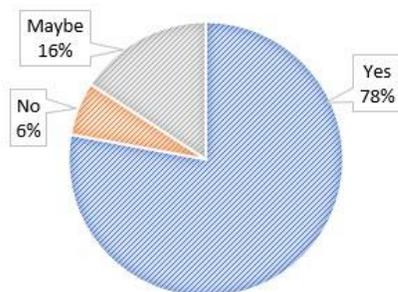
This issue may be worth further investigation with a statistically significant sample, especially since turnover undermines other investments in the ECE workforce.

#### 4. Plans to Stay in Field

We asked respondents who served in a teaching role if they planned to stay in the ECE field for the next three years. The majority (77.9%) intended to stay for the near future, 15.8% said maybe, and 6.3% did not plan to stay in ECE. We asked the same question of directors, administrators or owners (centers and homes) and saw very similar results: 81.3% intended to stay in ECE in the near-term, 14.7% said maybe, and 4% did not plan to stay.

Figure 16: Plans to Stay in Field in Short-Term (Teachers), of Survey Respondents, 2016

#### "DO YOU PLAN TO WORK IN ECE IN 3 YEARS?" - TEACHERS

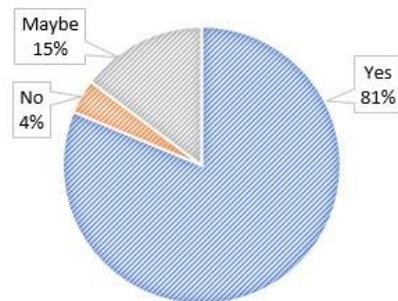


For everyone who said they would maybe or not stay in the field in the next three years, the primary reasons reported were desiring more opportunity for career growth (17.9%), seeking higher wages (14.9%) or better benefits (13.4%), and stress (10.4%). Some wanted a new challenge (16.4%), others planned to retire soon (14.9%), and 9% for other reasons.

We asked the same group if getting a regular bonus would affect their commitment to working in ECE: 22.4% said yes, 46.3% said no, and 31.3% said maybe.

Figure 17: Plans to Stay in Field in Short-Term (Directors), of Survey Respondents, 2016

#### "DO YOU PLAN TO WORK IN ECE IN 3 YEARS?" - DIRECTORS



## V. Discussion

As noted above, our goals for this research were to:

- Better understand the individuals in the workforce;
- Identify the challenges they face as workers and residents of the DC metro area;
- Learn about their professional goals and how best to support their

professional growth and commitment to the field; and

- Identify the resources necessary to help programs improve compensation and working conditions for staff, while meeting the increased demands of new licensing and labor standards.

While limited response numbers prevent us from fully generalizing the results of this survey, we did gain important insights toward our original research goals. There are, accordingly, important and instructive observations we can make about the members of the ECE workforce based on those who responded.

First, the workforce is overwhelmingly women and predominantly women of color, more so than the District population and more so than the national workforce on average. This means that the way the District manages the challenges facing this workforce has implications for the larger issues of gender and racial equity in the community.

Second, the workforce is under financial stress. Three-quarters worried about expenses, about half participated in public assistance programs, and one-fifth worked second or third jobs. Workers within the subsidy program worried more about expenses and were more likely to be enrolled in public programs. If, as the science suggests, high-quality ECE can counter the early and persistent stress that prevents infants and toddlers born in poverty from reaching their full potential, the

District must ensure that ECE teachers (if not all families) are adequately compensated and supported so that they do not bring additional stressors to their classrooms.

Interestingly, while we note the financial stress that many ECE workers toil under, we did not find that individuals were anxious to leave the field, despite the challenges. The workers who responded are strongly committed to the field of early childhood education, if not to specific employers within the field. For those who are looking to leave the field, wages and benefits are key, but so are career growth opportunities. Ensuring retention in the field is critical to outcomes for the children served, relationally and academically. Therefore, it is notable that nearly three-quarters of respondents had been in the field for five years or more, slightly less than the U.S. average.

Some of our most important findings are related to worker education. A large proportion of the sample did not have the credentials necessary to meet the new licensing requirements; nearly half of lead teachers of infants and toddlers had a lower level of education than is soon to be required. However, many are taking advantage of or seeking opportunities to learn, both through professional development and higher education. There is great interest in professional development opportunities addressing special needs or specialties like STEM. It is notable that the group with the highest rates of CDA attainment was among the QIN-participating workers who had otherwise lower levels of

degree attainment. Respondents reported high levels of interest in scholarship programs for bachelor's or master's degrees. One-third of those who had not yet completed a degree had stalled their studies due to financial strain.

Taken together, the results related to commitment to the field and education levels illustrate that higher degrees do not necessarily correlate with dedication. For example, lead infant and toddler teachers had lower levels of degree attainment but more years of experience than their counterparts teaching 3-5 year olds. Therefore, in order to retain a very dedicated and experienced group of teachers, the District must take extra care to ensure that sufficient affordable and appropriate opportunities exist to take working teachers from the CDA to both associate and bachelor's degrees. Further, given the relatively high proportion of respondents who will require additional education to meet the credential requirements by 2020, these results should raise some concern about the currently proposed timeline as well as the capacity of local institutions and access to funding to facilitate completion of formal degree programs.

As noted elsewhere, we encountered some limitations in the professional infrastructure of the workforce which are instructive. Many respondents to the survey were unaware of basic information about the industry in the District and about their own positions. For example, large numbers reported not knowing if the facility they worked for participated in the subsidy

program or the Quality Improvement Networks, both of which represent major investments in quality and equity in the District, especially for infants and toddlers. Many were also unaware of their employment benefits, and the availability of scholarship funds to continue education. We note, too, that a quarter of our sample are over 50 years old, and a number are planning to retire within the next several years. Most programs do not offer retirement benefits, and some of these individuals may be facing severely restricted income as they age.

## VI. Recommendations

Because of the relatively low number of respondents, we must be careful about how the data described here are applied. Nonetheless, our results, as well as comparisons to national data and corroboration with our findings in the 2016 *Solid Footing* report, allow us to make the following recommendations with confidence.

### A. Recommendations to better understand the ECE workforce

1. Data on the workforce need to be collected more regularly and consistently by OSSE using existing or enhanced systems.

Because of the limitations of this survey, detailed above, we recommend further study among a more representative sample of the workforce to more precisely and accurately measure compensation, education levels,

and challenges that impact retention in the field. Further, such study should distinguish between the pre-k workforce in schools and in centers, and the infant/toddler workforce as distinct from other ECE professionals, and should include analysis of benefits as well as wages. Such research cannot be undertaken with more specificity without more organized information. A centralized repository of data on the early childhood education workforce would aid District officials in creating and implementing more informed policies and programs. Without formal data on the number, earnings, and qualifications of early childhood teachers, policymakers cannot ensure that policies and programs are addressing the critical needs of the workforce, nor can they accurately estimate the cost of investing in the workforce (e.g., through scholarships or compensation programs.) The District should use regular reporting and monitoring systems - such as licensing, subsidy, and QRIS - to collect information about staff employed by each facility. For example, collecting and compiling basic contact information and job titles from workers who participate in the mandated professional development administered by OSSE seems like a straight-forward solution. This would provide the most basic information with which to design research investigations into specific issues for and about the workforce, and the ability to reach them directly. We have heard that a professional development registry is currently under development by OSSE.

In addition, licensed facilities that accept subsidy payments should be asked for

additional information about their employees, including credentials and rates of pay, just as they are to keep track of background checks and other personnel documents. This information should be kept digitally so that it can be analyzed, whether entered directly by the facilities or entered by government staff.

2. The District government needs to develop and support a robust Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) or other institution to build direct relationships with child development center and home staff.

A robust CCR&R could be a powerful tool toward engaging staff beyond directors in child development centers and with child development homes. Because of OSSE's, and government in general, role as a regulatory agency, providers may be less willing to provide data beyond that required through regulations and standards. We suspect that some of our issues with response were related to this dynamic. The purpose of a CCR&R agency is to provide an integrated and effective system of supports and services for families and for child care providers; this is common practice elsewhere in the country and could be very useful in D. C. OSSE has recently awarded a \$1 million grant for resource and referral services which should help the District by outsourcing some of the "carrots," and clearly separating the support and monitoring functions. The challenge for the grant recipient is going to be to (a) establish an identity separate enough from OSSE to enable that entity to build trust with the

provider community; (b) become an effective public voice on issues that affect both providers and consumers; and (c) innovate and develop expertise that adds value in the current environment. Once established, and once trust has been built through effective and continuous services, then the CCR&R – or an alternative intermediary organization – will be well-positioned to work with providers to collect additional data about the childcare workforce. Until then, the District will be limited in the type and quantity of data about the workforce it is able to collect.

#### B. Recommendations to mitigate key challenges faced by the ECE workforce

3. The District should establish mechanisms to ensure adequate wages and access to benefits for the ECE workforce in order to attract, retain and support qualified and experienced ECE professionals.

In our survey, we found that 76.9% worried about their monthly expenses. Over 20% worked additional jobs to supplement their income. Low wages and limited benefits impact the ability of providers to attract and retain qualified and experienced ECE professionals and the workers who responded to our survey, though committed to the field, appear to move frequently among employers. More of the new teachers who responded to our survey are working in Pre-K with 3-5 year olds. Though the qualification bar is higher, Pre-K overall provides better compensation than infant/toddler settings in general. We know

from our own past research and other studies on the topic that the child care workforce, overall, is inadequately paid, especially for the important work they do. One option is to implement a salary scale, where there is the authority to do so. A possible target for such a salary scale is for teachers of ages 0-2 and 3-5 to reach parity with educational positions of comparable training and credential requirements, like public school teachers. Our research from *Solid Footing* showed that reimbursement rates in the child care subsidy program covered only 66-70% of the median cost of caring for an infant or toddler in a high-quality environment. This is too low to ensure that providers' businesses were sustainable while also paying good wages with benefits to workers. This must be remedied through appropriate increases to reimbursement rates along with intentional measures to increase and sustain wages and access to benefits for employees.

4. To further support the economic security of workers, it will be important to improve knowledge of and access to certain programs and benefits.

Because research points to high-quality ECE environments as a refuge for children living in toxic stress, the District must ensure that those staffing ECE environments are not subject to such stress themselves. The rates of economic anxiety reported in our study underscored the need to find ways to increase wages, but we must also attend to other means of compensation and support like benefits. The top-reported source of anxiety was saving for retirement. Further, there was a high proportion of responses of

“I don’t know” in the portion of our survey asking about benefits offered by employers. The District government, together with employers and other players (such as the CCR&R outlined above), can work to ensure that ECE workers:

- a. Understand the local industry and the work options available within it, including the child care subsidy program and the QINs;
- b. Are aware of benefits offered at their workplace and through public programs, like the Earned Income Tax Credit, so that they can make informed choices for their financial futures and mitigate regular worry about expenses;
- c. Have access to benefits such as retirement and disability plans, if not through their employer, through private opportunities or initiation of publicly-organized retirement savings plans as is being tested and administered by the governments of Connecticut, Maryland, Oregon, and Washington, among others; and
- d. Use Early Childhood Share DC and the Child Care Resource and Referral, as well as other opportunities, to access information about scholarships, financial resources, as well as general information about the industry in DC, such as where investments are being made and

how to access opportunities for professional growth.

### C. Recommendations to support professional growth and retention within the ECE workforce

5. The District government must ensure that adequate support exists to upskill the ECE workforce and meet new education requirements enacted through licensing regulations.

The District has invested heavily – and effectively – in the CDA, and our data shows that most staff have or are in the process of completing this credential. OSSE is now requiring lead infant/toddler teachers to have associate degrees and directors to have bachelor’s degrees. Over half of survey respondents said they would need to get a higher degree or credential to keep their jobs. Almost half of lead infant-toddler teachers reported a current education level lower than 2020 licensing regulations will allow. To support the current workforce to meet these new standards, the District needs to make sure the infrastructure is in place and significant resources are dedicated to this initiative. This includes ensuring that all current teachers have the financial and other supports they need to complete the degree requirements, including extended deadlines if capacity does not exist to meet the current timelines. This is especially true for individuals who have established a career in early childhood care and education.

In recognition of the workforce’s existing skills and time invested in developing these

skills, and in recognition of the limited time full-time professionals have to dedicate to further formal education (especially when they have families to care for and other jobs to attend), OSSE should lead or help support negotiations with area colleges and universities to award college credits for the CDA and for at least some of its professional development offerings, and/or allow more time for teachers to attain new degrees. They must also assume responsibility for access to relevant degree programs in the region, including those in languages other than English for the 10% or more of the workforce that does not speak English as their primary language.

Whatever is decided, OSSE must also be clear with the community what waivers and supports will be available so that professionals can make informed decisions about the course of their education and careers.

6. More professional development and opportunities for career growth and specialization should be available to the ECE workforce, especially in the areas of developmental delays and disabilities, behavioral management, and specialized instruction such as STEM, reading and art.

Among the many reasons for such investment, the vast majority of ECE workers who responded to our survey intended to stay for the near future; only 6.3% did not plan to stay in ECE. The most common reasons for considering leaving the

field were to pursue better pay and benefits, or for more career growth opportunities. Three-quarters of our survey respondents also desired opportunities to acquire specialized skills within the field. Taken together, we see a dedicated workforce wanting opportunities to grow; this is important to recognize and reward in pursuit of a high-quality city-wide system. Of course, there are also many benefits to be gained in the classroom from deeper knowledge in these areas. As we recommended in our *Solid Footing* report, consideration should be given to building a professional development track for ECE teachers who want to expand their capacity to serve children with special needs, and coach others in how to do so effectively.

#### D. Recommendations to identify and develop resources to help programs improve compensation and support for workers

7. Disparities within the field must be recognized and addressed by government, advocates, providers and other stakeholders.

Our results, as outlined above, show differences in earnings, access to benefits, education, and years of experience by location of center, between infant/toddler teachers and Pre-K teachers, facilities participating in the QIN and subsidy programs versus those not participating. These disparities exist because of the various levels and structures for funding and associated requirements and regulations. Depending on the issue, there could be formal policy measures in place to correct

these disparities. For example, in order to ensure adequate compensation for all teachers, the District could explore uniform policies for all programs serving infants and toddlers. On the other hand, in order to retain experienced infant teachers in the subsidy program to ensure vulnerable children can create lasting bonds with qualified caregivers, a targeted incentive program may be the best solution, rather than a general approach. As noted above, comprehensive information about the current workforce and their needs should be collected and analyzed in order to inform such policy decisions.

## VII. Conclusion

The District needs to support the child care industry in creating more equitable workplaces in order to increase stability and access for children. Our results point to several ways this could be accomplished, including targeted increases in wages and access to benefits, higher reimbursement rates in the child care subsidy program, financial support to reach educational requirements, consideration of alternative ways to award college credits, and attention to the desire for other professional development in the field. We have also outlined several ways that better accounting and communication with the workforce could produce better data and better outcomes. Finally, we underscore the gender and racial equity issues embedded and perpetuated in the ECE workforce which must be addressed. High-quality early childhood education is rightly understood as

a tool to correct social inequities when children are at a critical time in their development. The District must ensure that those educational environments are both sustainable businesses and staffed with qualified, committed, well-supported workers. We believe this study can contribute to the understanding of how to do that difficult and essential work.

## VIII. Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we are grateful for the educators who participated in our survey of the early care and education workforce. Their generosity with their time and information made this research possible. Special thanks to Deedee Wright of Jubilee Jumpstart and Yael Kiken, formerly of Mary's Center, for their assistance with translation into Spanish and to Linda Janulis and Jill Chimka of Easter Seals, and Tiffany Williams of Martha's Table. We also appreciate the assistance provided by Robert Gundling and the DC Association for the Education of Young Children (DCAEYC), Carrie Thornhill and Barbara Kamara and the DC Early Learning Collaborative, Gloria Greene and the Home Providers Network, and Jeff Credit and Washington Association of Child Care Centers, as well as the QIN hubs (Mary's Center, CentroNia and UPO) and their members in helping to spread the word and encourage participation in the survey.

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