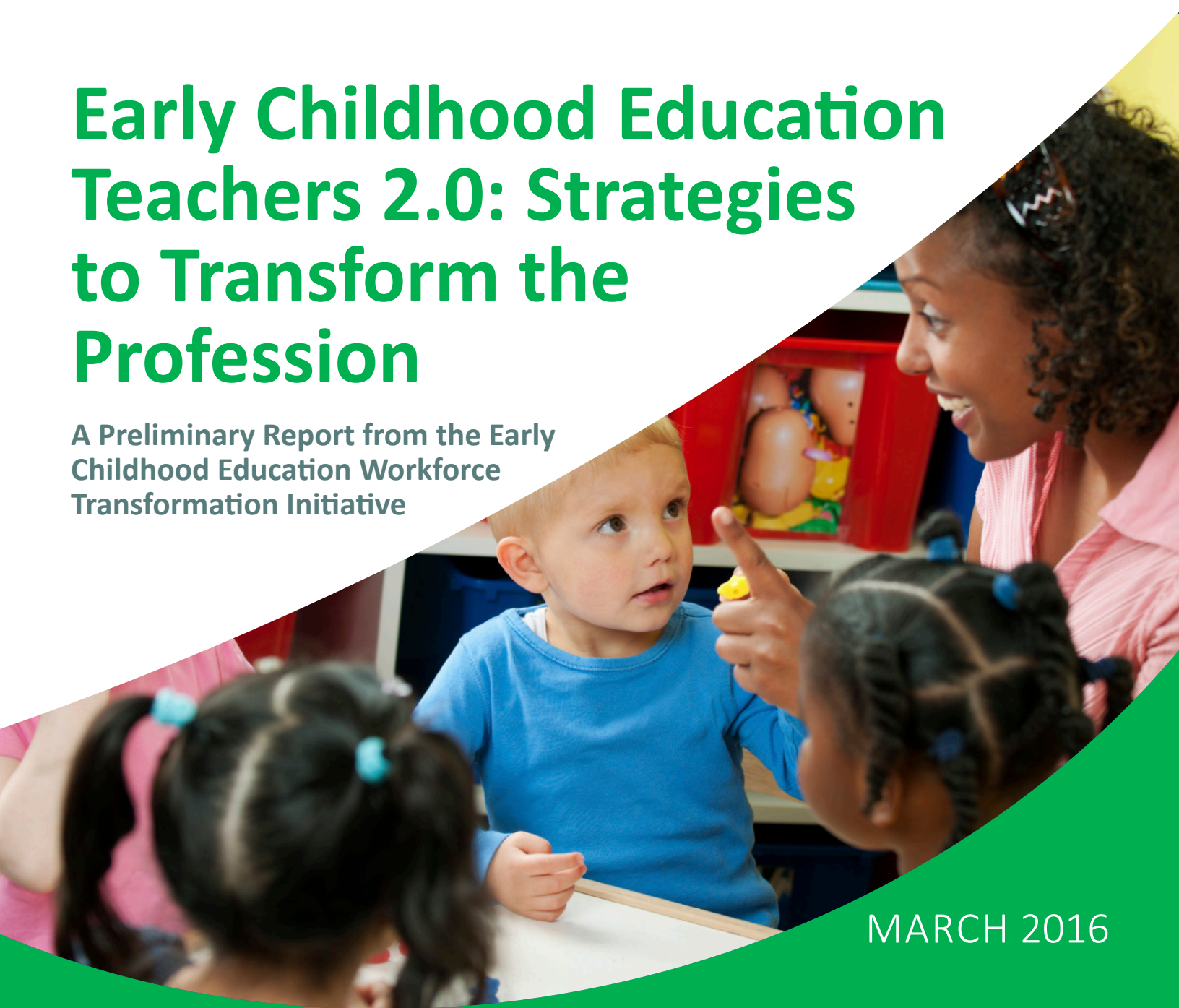


Early Childhood Education Teachers 2.0: Strategies to Transform the Profession

A Preliminary Report from the Early
Childhood Education Workforce
Transformation Initiative



MARCH 2016

The Early Childhood Education Workforce Transformation Initiative (ECEWTI) is a partnership of Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC), Montgomery Early Learning Centers (MELC), and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) to study the early childhood education sector and develop strategies that will result in a larger, more skilled, and more stable workforce. A generous grant from the William Penn Foundation supported ECEWTI. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the William Penn Foundation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	6
Teacher Recruitment	8
Teacher Recruitment - Recommendations	12
Teacher Preparation	15
Teacher Preparation - Recommendations	18
Teacher Retention and Advancement	23
Teacher Retention and Advancement - Recommendations	27
Conclusion	31
References	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the benefits of quality early childhood education (ECE) are widely known and accepted, the current ECE delivery system is unable to fully realize those benefits for children, families, and society. In spite of recent increases in state funding for Pre-kindergarten and local interest in universal Pre-kindergarten in Philadelphia, there are multiple, complex factors that challenge bringing quality ECE to scale. These include: insufficient public rates of pay to ECE providers; limited public investment in ECE; certified teacher shortages, and; limited teacher effectiveness.

Process

The ECE Workforce Transformation Initiative (ECEWTI) set out to learn more about the ECE workforce in Philadelphia and to design strategies for realizing a teacher workforce fully qualified and of sufficient size to deliver quality ECE. ECEWTI collected data through online surveys, focus groups, interviews, case studies, secondary data analysis and literature reviews. Data were collected about ECE employers, ECE staff, and ECE teacher preparation programs in order to answer the following questions:

- How well do the region's teacher preparation programs prepare ECE teaching staff for their jobs?
- What are the attributes of highly effective teacher preparation programs and what will it take to advance these strategies in the local higher education community?
- What factors (in addition to compensation) contribute to job satisfaction among ECE teachers and what strategies could reduce the high turnover rate among ECE teachers?
- How can the ECE field be more inclusive of men, Latinos and other populations less frequently occupying ECE teacher positions?
- How well do teachers progress along an ECE career pathway that ties increased education and credential attainment to advanced positions and compensation and how might that be improved?
- Are there successful models and/or lessons from other cities or sectors that should inform our efforts in Philadelphia?

These questions focus on understanding how to build instructional excellence throughout early childhood education classrooms in order to enhance outcomes for young children. Teachers with adequate preparation (BA degree with coursework in child development) and the desire and ability to form attached, nurturing relationships with young children are foundational to quality ECE and uncovering how to prepare, recruit, retain, and grow these professionals was the focus of this initiative.

Findings reveal that inadequate ECE teacher compensation is a critical barrier to: teacher recruitment, preparation, retention, advancement, and effectiveness; the quality of programs,

and positive child outcomes. It appears to be the single most important factor limiting quality ECE and the positive child outcomes that it delivers. However, as described below, the ECE landscape is complex and many facets of the ECE system are interwoven. Changes to any one will create ripple effects and potentially unintended consequences in other areas. This is particularly true if the overall public investment in ECE remains constant.

Background

There are less than 15,000 high quality slots for Philadelphia's 100,000+ children, birth-five in the Keystone STARS system. Quality is economically challenging to achieve and maintain. The base subsidy rate that Pennsylvania offers for child care has not increased since 2007,¹ and public funding is insufficient to cover the costs of quality ECE. According to the Nonprofit Finance Fund, child care subsidies "fall far short of covering the full cost of care. This gap increases as quality of care goes up."²

All current early childhood education funding sources are discretionary programs. Funding is capped, regardless of the number of eligible children and families on waiting lists. In its recent Recommendations Report, The Philadelphia Commission on Universal Pre-K estimates that \$115 million in Child Care Subsidy annually is being used at low quality or unrated Philadelphia programs. Because the pool of funding is capped and because a large portion is used to pay for low quality services, there are more than 19,000 income eligible 3-5 year old children who are unable to access quality pre-kindergarten services.

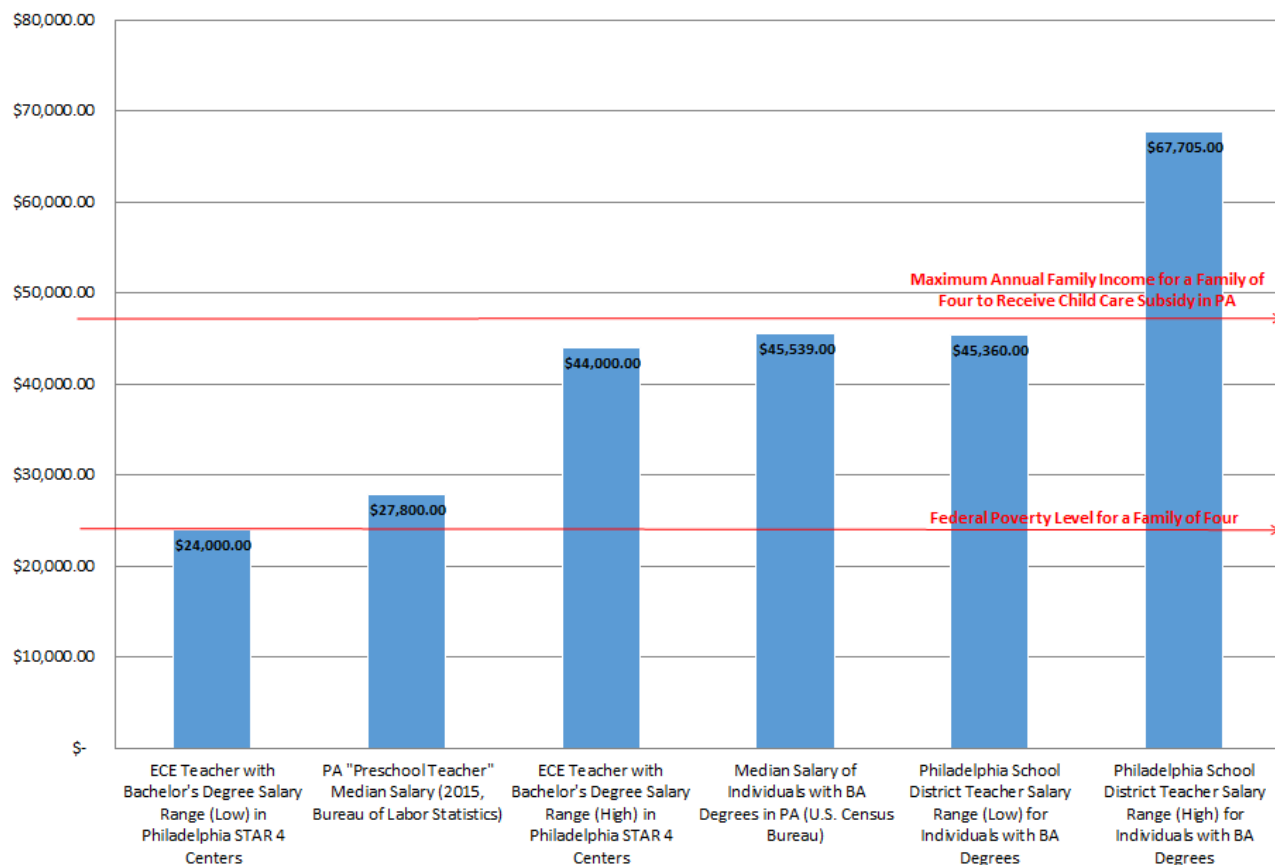
Findings

Chronic system and provider underfunding results in low rates of compensation for ECE teachers, the vast majority of whom are female. Nationally, 46% of the workforce qualifies for public benefits.³ One ECE employee wrote in response to the ECEWTI Survey:

With having a growing family to attend to, this field is not helping to pay for all expenses including loans taken to receive a degree in the field. ECE is super important but it's really annoying how under paid we are compared to school age teachers. We do the same amount of work if not more and put in longer hours. Some things just do not add up. I have been seriously contemplating going back to school for something else, but still in the education field since this is my calling without a doubt.

We gathered data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) website, ECEWTI administered online employee surveys, ECEhire.com (a local, specialized ECE online job posting site), and local ECE STAR 4 provider phone surveys to generate the teacher salary chart, below.

Figure 1. Salary Points for Teachers with Bachelor's Degrees



High quality and state funded pre-kindergarten programs require certified classroom teachers, as do public elementary schools. The success of recent advocacy efforts such as Pre-K for PA have resulted in new public investments in quality ECE, but recruitment efforts for the required certified teachers to staff pre-kindergarten programs are hampered by the failure of teacher preparation programs to expose students to the ECE sector and poor compensation offered in ECE as compared to elementary education. And because teacher shortages exist in k-12 as well, there typically are positions available in elementary schools that entice certified teachers away from ECE and into k-12.⁴

Because so many teachers that have earned Pennsylvania’s P-4 (pre-kindergarten to 4th grade) certification seek employment in elementary schools, even certified teachers often arrive in the ECE classroom ill prepared. The lack of good jobs in the sector result in teacher preparation programs that focus on primary grade instruction and field experiences in K-3 settings, to the exclusion of infant-toddler and preschool content. This creates a time consuming and expensive burden of on-the-job training for ECE employers, and because teacher turnover is so high (30% vs. 15% in k-12 settings)⁵ this is a persistent problem for employers.

Retention and advancement among the current workforce are challenging because the career pathway in ECE does not result in salary levels that compensate for the time and cost of further educational attainment. For those teachers that do pursue more education, higher pay is often only possible by leaving the classroom to assume a director or administrative role. ECE teachers that responded to our survey reported low levels of job satisfaction. This dissatisfaction, which is related to compensation and other factors such as work environment, exacerbates teacher turnover.

Teacher turnover, teacher shortages, and poor teacher preparation all limit teacher effectiveness and negatively impact children and families. High rates of absences and turnover, which children experience as loss, disrupt learning gains. In addition, financial stress experienced by teachers has been shown to contribute to teacher depression and physical health problems, which both limit teacher connection to children and families and also result in frequent absences and high turnover.

In 2011 Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D. and Sharon Ryan, Ed.D., wrote: “There is a serious mismatch between the expectations we place on early childhood teachers, the quality and relevance of available preparation, the supports for learning on the job, and the compensation and benefits we provide them.”⁶ Our local findings are consistent with this summary statement regarding the national ECE teacher dilemma.

Recommendations

ECEWTI identified strategies to address this misalignment. Successful implementation of these strategies will only be possible with the realization of significantly increased public funding for the ECE sector.

1. Teacher Recruitment

- Support ECE teacher affinity groups (males, Latinas, etc.) to expand opportunity for new populations to enter the workforce
- Introduce middle school students to the ECE career and education pathway while expanding high school CDA programs
- Create volunteer opportunities within ECE for high school students
- Introduce students in teacher preparation programs to the ECE career and education pathway to promote teaching in the early childhood sector as a viable alternative to teaching in elementary schools
- Partner with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to create local experts fluent in current Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regulation around teacher certification, including intern certification and reciprocity for teachers certified in other states

2. Teacher Preparation

- Convene local higher education institutions, public leaders, ECE employers and ECE experts to develop a coalition of IHEs, supported by stakeholders working to implement, test, refine, and promulgate strategies relating to IHE preparation of teachers
- Create a process for IHEs to access funds and other supports in order to meet a set of standards that reflect best practices in preparing ECE teachers
- Create a website to serve as a comprehensive source of comparable and actionable data regarding local teacher preparation programs
- Leverage Pennsylvania's existing professional development (PD) resources to promote best practices in credit-bearing PD
- Leverage new federal education and workforce development regulation in support of innovative ECE teacher preparation programs

3. Teacher Retention and Advancement

- Provide technical assistance to providers in operating more efficiently and drawing down multiple sources of funding so that they can direct more funding to staff compensation
- Work with OCDEL to ensure that child care subsidy rates are based on cost calculations that include appropriate salaries
- Fund research to pilot and study the impact of the integration of occupational health and safety practices (wellness, stress reduction and self-care) into ECE settings
- Increase access to credentials for incumbent workers through:
 - Apprenticeship programs that tie increased skill/education attainment to higher wages
 - Credit for prior learning options that accelerate education pathways
- Study the impact of career advising and tuition assistance programs in helping teachers earn Bachelor degrees and teacher certification

INTRODUCTION

Recent neuroscience tells us that learning begins at birth and that without developmentally appropriate stimulation and support, young minds fail to develop to their fullest potential. Studies document that children who begin kindergarten without a specific level of social,

emotional, and academic readiness tend to fall behind and stay behind. Quality early childhood education (ECE) is the strong start that children need.⁷

Quality ECE is defined by resourced settings where developmentally appropriate play and learning take place with facilitation from professional teachers. A growing emphasis on quality ECE is seen in programs such as Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Pre-K, Head Start State Supplemental, and Pennsylvania's tiered child care subsidy, which makes higher payments to providers that offer higher quality ECE. However, after more than a decade of advancing the development of a quality early care and education system through Pennsylvania's voluntary QRIS, only 21% of seats in participating providers in Philadelphia provide high quality care as measured by reaching STAR 3 or STAR 4 level.⁸

Because failure to succeed in the quality improvement system is directly linked to staff qualifications, efforts to scale quality, including Pre-K, will only be possible with a bigger and more highly qualified ECE workforce.⁹ More certified teachers and more certified-eligible teachers (those with bachelor's Degrees in Education) are required. In order to successfully incentivize existing ECE teachers to further their education and to create a pipeline of new, qualified ECE teachers, teacher compensation must match that available in other sectors for similarly credentialed staff. Current ECE teacher compensation falls far short of this goal. ECE teachers with bachelor's degrees earn less than teachers in elementary education, and less than their similarly degreed counterparts in other fields.¹⁰

In 2015, three local nonprofit organizations formed the Early Childhood Education Workforce Transformation Initiative (ECEWTI) to study the early childhood education workforce and to make recommendations for change. Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC), Montgomery Early Learning Centers (MELC), and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) collected and analyzed ECE workforce data. DVAEYC is one of the largest local affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and is a leader in integrating quality improvement efforts with policy initiatives. MELC is one of the largest regional early childhood employers with six early education sites (three of which are in Philadelphia) and over 200 staff members. MELC also provides technical assistance and professional development to early childhood and school age sites throughout the region. PHMC operates in 70 sites and serves 300,000 individuals annually through over 250 programs. During the past five years PHMC has developed considerable expertise in ECE, including operation of the Southeast Regional Key (SERK), Philadelphia Head Start Partnership, and the Fund for Quality.

This report presents key findings and recommendations organized in three major sections: teacher recruitment; teacher preparation; and, teacher retention and advancement. Because the areas are related, it will be essential to implement change in all three in order to ultimately achieve positive outcomes for children. For instance, improving teacher preparation programs alone will not resolve the ECE teacher shortage, as students will not enroll in these programs unless ECE teacher compensation becomes competitive with that in other sectors.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is challenging

ECE providers reported using multiple tools and strategies to recruit staff, but vacancies persist. One of the ECE providers that participated in the ECEWTI case study process reported spending more than \$250,000 annually for substitute teachers in order to meet the required student teacher ratio on any given day. This figure represents less than 1% of the provider's annual personnel-related expenditures, but it is large enough to cover full-time salaries and benefits for 8 teachers. While these substitutes meet licensing and Keystone STAR requirements, they do not provide consistency for children or for the co-workers with whom they teach.

High quality and state-funded Pre-K programs require certified classroom teachers. Local ECE providers, including the School District of Philadelphia, report challenges in recruiting certified teachers to ECE positions already. With increased state and local funding for higher quality Pre-K in the near future, if compensation in the ECE sector remains the same, recruitment challenges will increase. Positions within elementary schools pay more and offer more generous benefits than are available within the typical ECE setting. If two positions are available, one within ECE that offers a lower salary and limited to no benefits and the other within an elementary school that offers a higher salary, union membership, and generous benefits, teachers tend to choose the later. One respondent to the ECEWTI employee survey explained that "working in a school district could provide me with better compensation opportunities."

Positions within elementary schools are consistently available, as the larger field of teaching within which ECE operates is also experiencing teacher shortages. There are many likely factors at the root of the decline of the appeal of the k-12 teaching profession, such as: increased incidences of school violence; increased testing and assessment demands within schools; increased efforts to link teacher evaluation and remuneration to student test scores; and, decreased education funding levels which lead to poor work environments, limited school supplies, lack of ancillary school staff such as nurses, and other stressors. Given these environmental factors within the public school system, if compensation were equal, many certified teachers might be *more* likely to choose ECE over elementary school positions.

Respondents to the ECEWTI survey that reported not considering a career change indicated that they "love" the following elements of ECE: "my job and the atmosphere", "what I do," "working with young children," teaching, "the educational field," and "serving families." One respondent identified teaching as her passion and another added "I like my job and I know that I help the children learn." For many, teaching in ECE is a rewarding profession.

Educational and Credential Requirements are Complex

Currently there are a number of different teacher educational requirements based on the age of children being taught and public funding source. This is confusing for teachers and challenging for administrators. It is also indicative of our a larger lack of consensus around the metrics of teacher effectiveness. A few of the current recommendations and requirements are provided below and on the right.

Pre-K Requirement:

Early Childhood Education Instruction I Certificate

N-3 Instructional Certification or PK-4 Instructional Certification (also referred to as Level I)

- BA degree from state-approved ECE teacher education program
 - Supervised student teaching experience (minimum of 12 weeks, full-time)
 - 3.0 GPA
 - 6 semester hour credits in college level mathematics
 - 3 semester hour credits in college level English Composition; and
 - 3 semester hour credits in college level English/American Literature
- Recommendation or verification of education from the preparing college/university
- Successful completion of PA required tests

STAR 3 Requirement:

100% of teachers at Career Lattice Level V or above

STAR 4 Requirement:

100% of teachers at Career Lattice Level V or above

50% of teachers at Career Lattice Level VI or above

Level V is a AA/AAS in:

ECE/equivalent degree or related field including 18 ECE credits OR Elementary Ed. And 12 ECE credits OR unrelated degree (BS/BA/AA/AAS) including 30 ECE credits OR ASB/AST degree in ECE with articulation agreement

Level VI is a BS/BA in:

ECE/equivalent degree OR related field including 30 ECE credits OR Elementary Ed. And 18 ECE credits OR any field with ECE Certification

Institute of Medicine Recommendations

- Bachelor's degree and specialization in the knowledge and competencies needed to serve as a care and education professional
- Supervised induction period
- Competency-based qualification requirements

Compensation offered is low

While a rational market might respond to teacher shortages by driving salaries up, because government is the payer for ECE for children living in low-income families, this is not the case in ECE. In Philadelphia, approximately 75% of children live in families with incomes that qualify for child care subsidy. Because the base subsidy rates in Pennsylvania have not increased since 2007, wages are stagnant.¹¹ Said another way, in a business where such a high percentage of costs (70-73% locally) are tied to personnel, (Nonprofit Finance Fund, personal communication, December 3, 2015) compensation can only increase if payment rates (both public and private) increase. Instead, teacher shortages in ECE lead to a downward spiral in quality, where individuals with minimum education requirements fill open teaching positions and the overall quality of early learning declines. A recent report from the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies calls for a minimum bachelor's degree requirement with specialized knowledge and competencies for all lead educators.¹² In contrast, lead teachers in Pennsylvania can have a Child Development Associate (CDA) and 12 college credit hours in ECE and qualify as a lead teacher according to the highest quality category in the state's rating system.

ECE employers from 83 local centers responding to the ECEWTI online survey indicated that they employ more than 281 directors, 2,214 lead teachers and 1,800 assistant teachers. The centers operate at various levels of quality. While not all respondents answered the questions regarding salary, the average starting salary for Lead Teachers was \$25,638 annually (n=21) and \$11.91 per hour (n=14). The average starting salary for Assistant Lead Teachers was \$18,786 annually (n=16) and \$9.52 per hour (n=12), which is well below the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four.

High quality centers, which qualify for higher subsidy rates and other funding programs, generally pay higher salaries to their staff. In turn, qualified and effective teachers are the most fundamental requirement for and indicator of quality ECE programming. Program quality increases as teachers are better compensated (and credentialed), reinforcing the link that research has consistently demonstrated between teacher compensation and program quality.¹³ This trend can be seen on the table below, which is based on job postings by Keystone STAR centers on the ECEHire.com site during a three-year period.¹⁴

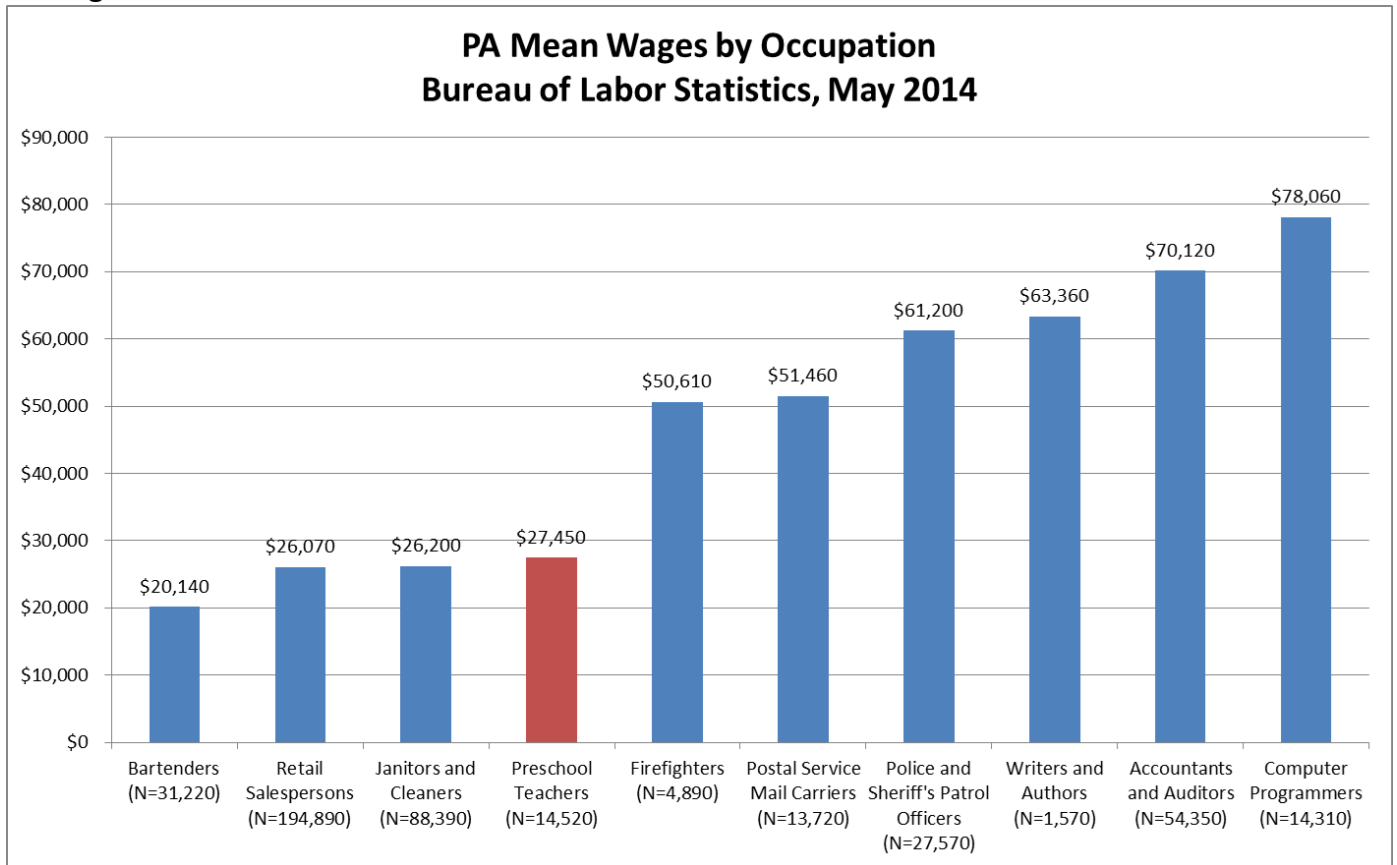
	Averaged Annual Salary Range (\$)
STAR 1	27,000 - 33,667
STAR 2	30,000 – 34,000
STAR 3	32,429 - 34,857
STAR 4	32,735 – 37,560

An Economic Policy Institute brief in 2015 analyzed national data regarding median hourly wage and demographics of child care workers and all other workers and found that there is a “wage penalty” related to working in child care.¹⁵ Controlling for gender, nativity, citizenship, race and ethnicity, education attainment, age, marital status, urbanicity, and region of the country, the

authors found that child care workers earned significantly less than all other workers. Further, the wage penalty increases the more education credentials a worker has and the older a worker is, as these factors substantially increase earnings in sectors other than child care. “With the exception of workers age 18-22, child care workers make significantly less than similar workers in other occupations.”¹⁶

Initial findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education indicated that while wages were tied to educational attainment, wages for ECE staff with bachelor degrees were much lower than for bachelor degreed workers in other occupations.¹⁷ The report further found that teachers of young children (birth to 3) were paid less than teachers of children 3-5, even when education level and other differences were taken into account.¹⁸ In 2014 Marcy Whitebook wrote, “Poor compensation and low status in ECE programs not only fuel harmful levels of teacher turnover, but also discourage academically successful young people from considering ECE teaching careers.”¹⁹

Figure 2.



ECE teachers have enormous responsibilities for the safety and education of young children. Their duties include complex tasks such as lesson planning, communication with families, and report writing and documentation. As minimum wage increases, starting salaries in many retail and hospitality positions will approach or meet those paid to ECE teachers. Therefore, teacher

shortages are likely to increase, potentially testing ECE providers' abilities to meet teacher/student ratios, fulfill basic licensing standards, and meet and maintain high levels of quality.

Recruitment efforts are not successful in creating a diverse ECE workforce

Of the 407 respondents to the ECEWTI online survey of ECE employees, 96.3% were female. A January 2016 report from the National Women's Law Center documents that 95.5% of child care workers across the U.S. are women.²⁰ Low compensation also inhibits recruitment efforts to diversify the workforce. Job seekers balk at the high levels of responsibility and the low levels of compensation in ECE. ECEWTI focus groups revealed that even for those that love working with children, accepting a position as an ECE teacher with current levels of compensation is hard to justify. Gender-specific pressure was referenced, with one of the male ECE staff focus group participants noting, "There's the fact that the pay is low. If you still go with the idea that men are the breadwinners that forces men out of the field or just not even getting into it." Another participant agreed, "There is cultural pressure that affects men and the choices that they make." As a low wage sector, ECE does not readily qualify as a priority occupation, and therefore struggles to access limited federal, state and local vocational training funds. This limits opportunities for male and female youth, both in and out of school, to be exposed to the field.

Attendees at the ECE Latino staff focus group described challenges related to navigating higher education application, enrollment and completion processes. Notably, these challenges are exacerbated for people who speak English as a second language. While there are options for CDA programs conducted in Spanish, such as the program through Penn State Extension, advanced degree programs tailored to the needs of the Spanish speaking community are limited and negatively impacts their ability to advance in the field.


TEACHER RECRUITMENT ●

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations, below, will ease recruitment efforts, but will not make a significant impact unless paired with competitive compensation.

➡ **Support ECE teacher affinity groups (males, Latinas, etc.) to expand opportunity for new populations to enter the workforce.**

ECEWTI held focus groups with males that work in ECE and with Latinas that work in the field. Participants in both focus groups suggested that peer supports and networking could be important tools to both ensure retention and recruit other males and Latinas to the field. These groups could serve as learning communities and cohorts for teacher preparation degree/certification programs. Fenwick (2001) found that extra supports provided to minority students preparing to enter the education field were effective in keeping students engaged in their programs.²¹ The need for networks tailored to these affinity groups was endorsed by Mitchell and colleagues²² work that suggests existing networks will unlikely be a successful tool to recruit minorities into the education field. Pesek's work has shown that establishing community partnerships with churches and colleges can be helpful in identifying teaching candidates belonging to minority groups.²³

 **Introduce middle school students to the ECE career and education pathway while expanding high school CDA programs.**

While several training programs in Philadelphia exist for both in school and out of school youth to attain relevant credentials to work in ECE, these programs are not uniformly effective, well-utilized, marketed, nor scaled. Programming for middle school students is needed to introduce and interest them in the ECE field. The District has successfully marketed other Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to middle school students, such as the Culinary Arts program, but has not attempted an intentional effort of this kind for the CDA CTE. Vocational counseling had been provided to middle school students in the past, but District cuts have eliminated this function. Effective marketing to middle school students will increase the utilization of the existing high school teacher preparation programs and will increase the likelihood for program growth and replication.²⁴ The District could use an existing middle school teacher career introduction and promotion program, such as ProTeam. The ProTeam Program has served more than 15,000 South Carolina students since its inception in 1989 and has been implemented in six other states. The program introduces education as a career choice to middle school students through a semester or year-long hands-on course with student driven activities. Programs such as Teacher Cadet in South Carolina and Educator Rising nationally are also being used to attract high school and middle school students to the education field and have been shown to be effective in attracting male and minority students into education. More than 60,000 students have participated in the Teacher Cadet Program in its 30-year history.

In addition to encouraging middle school and high school students to enter the ECE field, the District is interested in pursuing partnerships with local colleges and universities to create the organizational relationships necessary to “rebrand” the existing CDA CTE program into a “2 + 2” career pathway program. These programs, which are expanding nationally, enroll students in community college with a goal set on a Bachelor’s Degree after the Associate Degree is earned. Coursework taken at the community college then transfers to a four-year program, allowing the student to complete a bachelor’s degree in the same amount of time it would have taken if they had gone to the four-year institution right out of high school. The community college and four-year school work together to ensure all of the courses they offer complement each other for an overall, comprehensive degree program. The 2+2 program operates as a guaranteed

transfer program designed to minimize risk, costs, and time spent for students attending community college with a goal of attaining a Bachelor's Degree. Roane State in Tennessee, Tennessee Technology University, and Monroe Community College of the State University of New York, all offer Early Childhood Education 2 + 2 dual admission degree programs. This 2 + 2 rebranding could potentially maximize enrollment in the District's CDA CTE programs, thereby allowing new District programs to open.

➡ Create volunteer opportunities within ECE for high school students.

ECEWTI focus group participants mentioned starting their careers in the ECE field as volunteers, either while in school or after. Service learning programs have been shown to help high school students become more knowledgeable and realistic about careers.²⁵ Reading to young children in quality ECE settings as a coordinated effort tied to community service requirements is one strategy to promote the importance of ECE and the benefits of considering the teaching profession. This opportunity will expose high school students to ECE teachers and help them to develop a greater understanding of working with young children.

➡ Introduce students in teacher preparation programs to the ECE career and education pathway to promote teaching in the early childhood sector as a viable alternative to teaching in elementary schools.

While fostering interest among middle school students for teaching in ECE settings is a more long-term strategy, other, immediate options also exist. Students currently enrolled in teacher preparation programs and individuals with bachelor degrees in any subject area are two populations that offer intermediate-term possibilities to alleviate the certified teacher shortage. As stated by faculty and administrators of teacher preparation programs at IHEs, not all students enrolled in teacher preparation programs, even those pursuing elementary or P-4 certification, are exposed to the idea of teaching in ECE settings. Through improved integration and collaboration between ECE providers and IHEs, this group of individuals – already self-identified as interested in teaching – could be approached and introduced to the many rewards of teaching young children.

➡ Partner with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to create local experts fluent in current Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regulation related to teacher certification, including intern certification and reciprocity for teachers certified in other states.

ECEWTI focus group participants noted that state regulation governing teacher certification is complex to understand and administer. An Early Childhood Education and Teacher certification Frequently Asked Questions document on the PA Keys website is 8 pages long and covers topics such as conversion of an Instructional I Certificate into an Instructional II Certificate, approved evaluator criteria, and teacher intern certificate. The document is dense and includes multiple links to regulation, and citations of code. There is no contact person name or information provided as part of the document. Teachers and Directors struggle to operationalize the

regulations related to teacher certification and do not typically have contacts within PDE from whom they can seek assistance. OCDEL is well positioned to work with PDE to clarify existing regulations and to train Regional Key staff on these regulations. Having a teacher certification expert within each Regional Key would provide immediate, needed assistance to current teachers with Bachelor Degrees that are interested in advancing their careers.

TEACHER PREPARATION

ECE employer needs are not being met

Researchers have long noted the variety of ECE teacher education preparation programs.²⁶ Variation exists in regard to what is taught, student opportunities to apply their knowledge, the structure of adult learning environments, and the skill and knowledge of teacher educators. The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment has been working to standardize key elements of ECE teacher pre-service training, and to test the hypothesis that both the content and the method of delivery of an educational degree influence teacher practices.²⁷ Because the tendency in ECE is to focus on program quality, rather than individual teacher effectiveness, this is relatively new work in the field.

During the course of ECEWTI data collection, ECE employers expressed frustration at the poor preparation of teaching staff and the time that they must spend providing on-the-job training to address this shortcoming. To the survey question: “Which colleges/universities produce the most prepared new ECE employees?” one respondent noted, “None really,” and another respondent commented, “Seems to completely depend upon student and not the college program.”

Teacher preparation programs in the region, while accredited, are not fully meeting the needs of their students or the ECE programs that employ them. While the Pennsylvania Department of Education created the P-4 Teacher category more than a decade ago, teacher preparation programs continue to struggle to address the development and needs of young children (birth-5) in their course work and field experiences. In places like North Carolina, there are focused efforts to improve and coordinate teacher preparation. The Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in North Carolina (SCRIPT-NC) project is a partnership between the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina community college faculty in North Carolina. Designed to better prepare ECE teachers, the project has two primary components: 1) enhanced coursework and field experiences that incorporate evidence-based and competency-based practices; 2) support for community college faculty and professional development providers through the dissemination of resources, webinars, and other professional development opportunities.

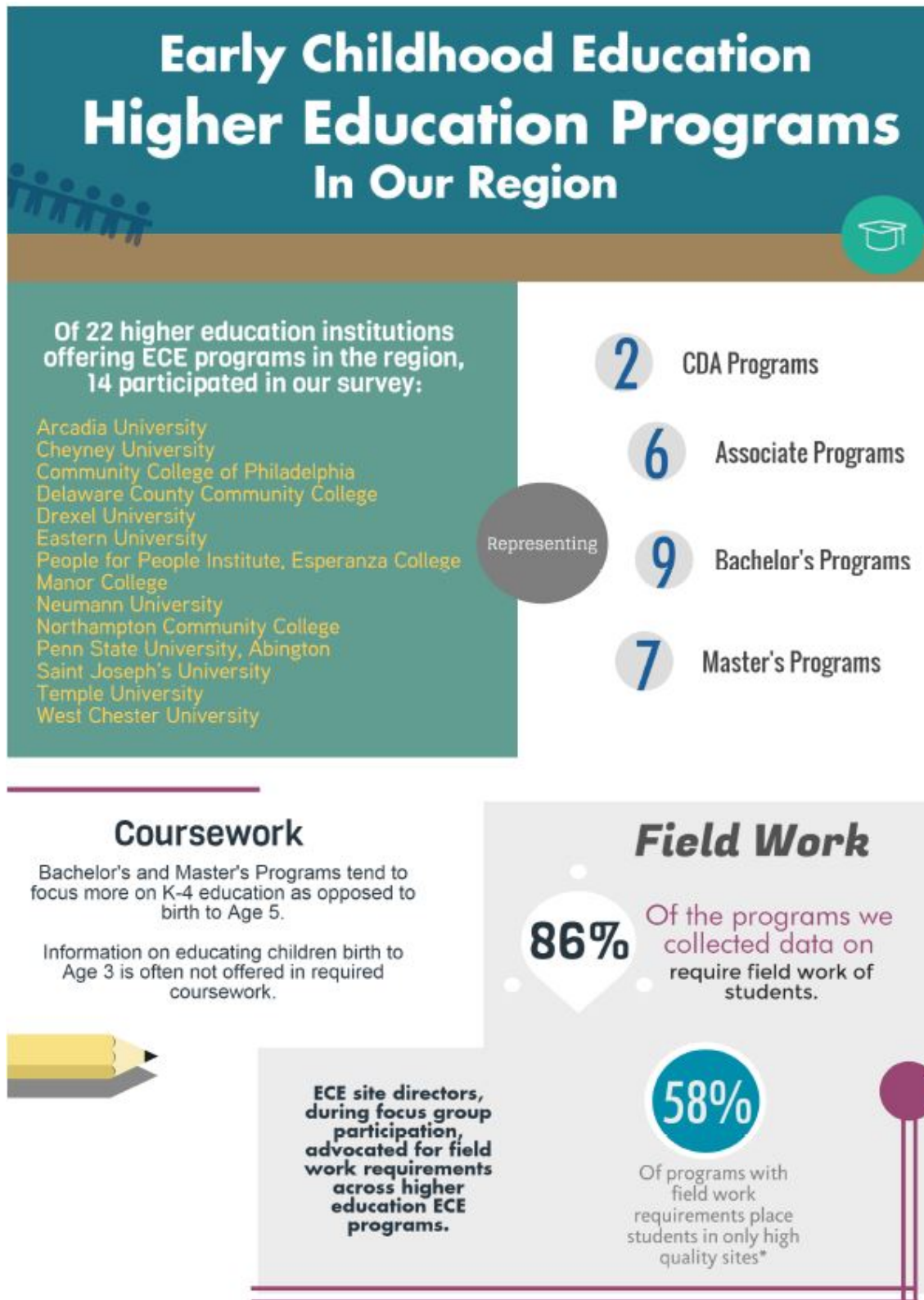
Survey findings from 14 local IHE teacher preparation programs echo the stark picture painted by ECE center directors and TA providers. Regional teacher preparation program course work does not appear to focus on children ages 0 to 3; field experiences do not typically occur in quality ECE settings; and faculty are often not experienced with age-appropriate teaching methodologies and practices for ECE. Field experience is not required at all institutions participating in the survey because some of the degree programs offered are not intended to lead to certification. This unnecessarily limits graduates of these programs. Because the pool of students for teacher preparation degree programs at Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) is limited by the low wages of the sector, these programs are small and frequently operate without any full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty may not have expertise in ECE. And as is often true more generally within IHE, teacher preparation programs do not track key student outcome data nor do they offer supports and services that have been proven to be effective in assisting non-traditional students.

Teacher preparation degree program students are not satisfied

ECEWTI reviewed de-identified transcripts of 100 ECE staff at providers in the Philadelphia region participating in Keystone STARS in October 2015. These transcripts revealed significant problems with transferring credits from one institution to another, which negatively impacted existing ECE teachers in advancing their careers. This finding was corroborated by focus group and survey participants, and in meetings with IHEs, participants discussed the frustrations and challenges of working across institutions to ensure that student credits successfully transfer. This is true even for those IHEs participating in the Agreement from the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC), which was legislation designed and enacted to ensure that program-to-program coordination between institutions was available to ensure the efficient and effective movement of students among these institutions while guaranteeing the students' continuous advancement in learning. Unfortunately, this ideal of what IHEs refer to as "program-to-program articulation" has not been achieved. Instead, credits often transfer as electives, but not as required courses for education majors. This means that students have to take (and pay for) course work that they have already covered at another institution.

Massachusetts has created an ECE Track so that coursework is easily transferred between institutions, and just began track implementation in 2016. Researchers from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia, working as part of the National Center for Research on Early Childhood Education have studied the feasibility and potential benefits of offering a common course across multiple institutions of higher education and found evidence that a standardized college course may successfully impact the knowledge and beliefs of students preparing to be early childhood educators.²⁸

Figure 3.



TEACHER PREPARATION ●

RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 4.

Based on our understanding of the needs of employers and students, and the identified gaps in our current system, ECEWTI created a **Gold Standard for Institutions of Higher Education**, to include:

1. **Curriculum content speaks to local/state ECE sector.** Local ECE employer experiences with newly degreed teachers point to the need for increased connections between the curriculum and the local ECE landscape. Topics such as licensing, Keystone STARS, the Professional Development Registry, Kindergarten Entry Inventory, PELICAN, and state and local funding streams and ECE programs are important for teacher candidates to understand so that they can better navigate them on the job.
2. **Adequate coursework focused on birth through five, including infant/toddler.** According to survey information collected by ECEWTI, the majority of higher education institutions in the region do not have a stand-alone Early Childhood Education Department. Most have their ECE programs couched within a larger education or liberal arts department. Higher level degrees tend to focus more on school-age children. In required coursework for ages 3-5 in Bachelor's and Master's programs, in spite of the early child development context which begins at birth, information on children ages birth-3 is scarce.
3. **Field placements that start early in the student's program, inform reflection in the classroom, and are located in high-quality ECE programs.** The majority of IHEs require students at all levels to complete field work, but the length of that field work and the required prerequisites vary not only by degree level, but also by institution. Multiple data sources indicated that classroom practice and pedagogy do not always jibe, and that this disconnect is an important "teachable moment" for students in teacher preparation programs. Past data collected indicates that, while directors and owners of ECE centers see field work as valuable in preparing employees in the workforce, they feel that the experience should be in an ECE classroom specifically, not in a classroom with older children.

4. **Tuition rates and payment mechanisms that take into consideration the ECE industry's current wages.** While it may not be possible to balance a higher education institution's budget on the tuition that an ECE teacher can afford, setting rates that can never be paid is a disservice to our critical—and critically under-resourced—field. Approaches to minimizing costs include offering a whole class at discounted rates and offering credits at a reduced fee for on-the-job and/or life experience. Approaches to easing payment include increased efforts to access scholarships and financial aid, provision of extended payment plans, and assistance to students to apply for loan forgiveness.
5. **Flexibility and supports that allows for the participation of full-time workers and non-traditional learners.** Adult learners are often hesitant to return to school, due to financial costs, limited time available for coursework and assignments, and anxiety regarding academic challenges. Learning differences and test anxiety further decrease the likelihood of academic success. Many IHEs are experimenting with offering course work at a variety of times and in locations and utilizing online instruction to better meet the needs of full-time workers. Offering learning cohorts helps create the support that is often critical to success, and allowing students to complete field experience and student teaching at their current place of employment overcomes a major barrier. Financial aid counseling and assistance, academic tutoring, translation and interpretation, and academic advising have also been shown to greatly benefit non-traditional learners and boost their graduation rates. (Whitebook and Ryan in *Degrees in Context: Asking the Right Questions about Preparing Skilled and Effective Teachers of Young Children*) IHEs may provide these needed supports directly and/or via other sources.
6. **Articulation between two- and four-year degrees.** Many full-time early childhood workers who go back to school do not start out on a path that leads straight to a bachelors' degree. They gather together scarce funds to take a course that presents itself, or take advantage of a funding source that directs them toward a particular institution, or enroll at an IHE that aggressively markets its affordability. Often these decisions result in great inefficiency and wasted credits as they find their way into bachelor's programs. Even people who work their way systematically through the coursework for an associate's degree find that many of their courses are not accepted by the four-year school into which they transfer. Articulation is a critical step in the creation of a high-value teacher preparation program. Related to this issue, is that of prior learning assessment. ECE teachers that pass certified tests and/or complete portfolios that are assessed to meet specific learning objectives, must be assured that these prior learning assessment credits will be honored by other institutions of higher learning and ultimately be a valid part of their path to a degree.

7. **Accreditation by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation).** Two-year institutions have the opportunity to align themselves with the standards of NAEYC, the premier early childhood professional association in the nation. The NAEYC associate degree standards are based on recent research in early childhood development and learning, are performance based, and describe what well-prepared graduates of associate degree programs should know and be able to do. Since we direct parents to choose high quality early childhood programs, there is logic to having similar guidance for directing our workforce for teacher preparation. NAEYC also recognizes high-quality Baccalaureate and Graduate programs, as a partnership with CAEP.
8. **Ensuring that any on-site ECE programs meet the highest quality ratings.** Not only can a high quality on-site ECE program offer care and education for children of students, staff and faculty as well as children from the community, but it can provide a convenient and high quality setting for field placements. Not all IHEs have a children's program associated with their college or university, but for those that do, it is imperative that the quality in these settings be maintained at a very high level.
9. **Full-time faculty.** Many IHEs borrow staff from other departments without any background in ECE to teach courses in business or leadership. Or they rely on part-time adjunct faculty to teach courses for cut-rate salaries. As we strive to build up respect for our ECE workforce and compensate them fairly for the important work they do, we need a similar goal for the college instructors who play such a critical role in preparing them for this work. It is hard to guarantee quality in a college classroom if instructors are poorly paid and only marginally related to the institution. And it is hard to be well-prepared for the challenges that an ECE teacher will face if they learn from people who have no experience in the field. While full-time faculty may drive up the cost of an ECE degree, the availability of scholarship support, loan forgiveness, and, eventually, better ECE teacher compensation, would help make the cost of full-time IHE faculty manageable for the field.
10. **Curriculum content that addresses inclusion of children with identified special needs.** Almost 90,000 Pennsylvania children ages birth to five with disabilities or developmental delays and receive early intervention services. To prepare early childhood educators to support these children and their families, provide appropriate referrals, and create inclusive classroom practices that allow all children to succeed, IHEs need to either include a required course on this content, or embed a focus on early intervention in the overall curriculum.

➡ Convene local higher education institutions, public leaders, ECE employers and ECE experts to develop a coalition of IHEs, supported by stakeholders working to implement, test, refine, and promulgate strategies relating to IHE preparation of teachers.


Based on the model of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ECEWTI recommends convening IHE administrators and faculty in order to promote the IHE ECE standards, finalize their metrics, and announce the availability of resources and supports to support IHEs in meeting these standards. (See figure 4 for IHE ECE Gold Standards). The Gates Foundation IHE coalition building model recognizes that IHEs serve diverse bodies of students via diverse organizational structures and capacities, and that as such, no single policy or set of policies will serve the needs of all students and IHEs. Using this framework, the Gates Foundation has been successful in securing agreement on overarching concepts that should inform all IHEs programs and policies. Education nonprofits, associations representing IHEs, and workforce nonprofits should be included in this work. The convening will set the stage for local IHE coalition building and agreement around implementation of the Gold Standards.

➡ Create a process for IHEs to access funds and other supports in order to meet a set of standards that reflect best practices in preparing ECE teachers.

After reviewing the seminal work of Marcy Whitebook and Lea Austin (including the 2015 Early Childhood Higher Education: Taking Stock Across the States) and speaking with the authors, ECEWTI created and fielded a survey of IHEs about current teacher preparation program practices. Based on these findings, the national inventory, and input received in focus groups with ECE employers and employees, ECEWTI created the IHE ECE Gold Standard, a set of standards for IHEs to meet in order to best prepare ECE teachers. These standards mirror many of the metrics presented in the national inventory, and benefit from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment's work. (See figure 4).

ECEWTI engaged IHE teacher preparation program staff and/or administrators individually and in groups more than 10 times during the course of the year, and introduced the gold standard to participants attending a February 2016 group IHE meeting. Further work remains in order to develop metrics related to the gold standard, identify incentives for participation, and identify resources and processes to work toward implementation of the standard at local IHEs. In North Carolina, they have launched a grant program to provide training and technical assistance for community colleges to apply for NAEYC accreditation of their ECE teacher preparation programs. The grant program funds the cost of the initial accreditation and site visit, and the community college agrees to maintain accreditation and absorb related costs for at least the initial accreditation period of seven years. The state's goal is for 100% participation of community colleges.²⁹ Locally, in addition to the possibility of similar grants, an important incentive for Gold Standard attainment would include eligibility for Pennsylvania's Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program. Currently ECE staff can use these funds to purchase course work at all IHEs authorized by the PDE to offer P-4 teacher preparation degrees. Limiting the use of

these funds to those programs that have reached or are working to reach the ECE Gold Standard could be a powerful incentive for change.

 **Create a website to serve as a comprehensive source of comparable and actionable data regarding local teacher preparation programs.**

Recently the United States Department of Education built a website (collegescorecard.ed.gov) designed to help prospective students find and compare schools. The site allows a user to search by program or degree using filters for school location, size, name, public vs. nonprofit private vs. for profit private, religious affiliation, and specialized mission. Once the search parameters are established, the site provides average annual cost, graduation rate, salary after attending, and financial aid and debt for the group of schools that meet the search criteria, and compares each of these to the national averages. As use of the new site becomes more prevalent, student decision-making regarding IHEs will become increasingly data-driven. Unfortunately, the site doesn't make any distinction between types of education programs, such as P-4 or certification.

A local website that allows users to easily compare teacher preparation degree programs side-by-side is also integral and could be built on the model of the Readiness Center Network found on the Early Educators Pathway website (<http://www.earlyeducatorpathways.org>). Massachusetts built this site to serve as a resource to assist individuals in finding the best option for advancing their careers in early education and care by pursuing recognized credentials and college degrees at any one of the many quality programs at colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Locally, it would be important for such a website to also include information regarding IHE progress in meeting the gold standard and other such data to assist those seeking to enroll in a teacher preparation program with making comparisons across programs and institutions.

 **Leverage Pennsylvania's existing professional development (PD) resources to promote best practices in credit-bearing PD.**

According to the Pennsylvania Early Learning: Keys to Professional Development, Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program Guidelines (2014), Pennsylvania's Rising STARS Tuition Assistance program currently supports credits earned at all state-approved teacher preparation programs. As mentioned above, by limiting use of these funds for credits earned only at IHEs that meet the IHE ECE Gold Standard, we could ensure a higher caliber of ECE teacher preparation. In addition, much of the PD currently purchased by the Southeast Regional Key and provided with OCDEL funding is non-credit bearing. By transitioning to more competency-based training that is aligned with college/university course syllabi, teachers could receive needed credits for this type of training. North Carolina provides a model that moves in this direction. The state has shifted away from workshops toward Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The CEU-bearing trainings must be evidence- and research-based and developed by university faculty.³⁰

 **Leverage new federal education and workforce development regulations in support of innovative ECE teacher preparation programs.**

A provision in the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages states to authorize new teacher preparation programs with innovative business and delivery models that are aligned with student outcomes, and to recognize certificates from these programs as equivalent to a master's degree in education. Recently innovative models, including Relay, which operates in Philadelphia and Camden, have begun to bring coaching and coursework designed to help current teachers meet certification requirements directly into K-12 schools. In addition to the work with IHEs to meet the ECE Gold Standard, Philadelphia's ECE workforce would benefit from the development of an alternative, more flexible certification program.

Similarly, the federal reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers numerous opportunities for creating and funding new approaches to workforce development, including apprenticeship programs, career and technical education for young adults, etc. WIOA includes several changes that strengthen apprenticeship in the public workforce system including: 1) specifies inclusion of a member of the apprenticeship system on state and local workforce boards; 2) automatically qualifies Registered Apprenticeship programs to be on a state's Eligible Training Provider List and to receive federal workforce funding; 3) provides for increased reimbursement rates for employers for on-the-job training; 4) supports apprenticeship as a workforce strategy for youth; 5) prioritizes apprenticeship as a key strategy in meeting the needs of business. ECE employers, advocates, and workforce investment representatives should form a local task force to explore these options in WIOA and develop a robust implementation plan to benefit ECE.

TEACHER RETENTION & ADVANCEMENT

Retention

In the ECE setting, good teaching is understood to require a teacher to build and sustain a nurturing relationship with the children she teaches.³¹ Continuity of care is essential to create an environment in which those relationships can occur. Children experience teacher absences and turnover as loss and, therefore, these factors disrupt learning gains. Turnover among ECE teachers impacts children, families and the centers they leave. Center impacts include: overworked remaining staff, lost knowledge, and increased recruitment and training costs for replacement staff. In addition, high turnover has been demonstrated to prevent ECE programs from improving their quality.³²

Turnover in ECE nationally is estimated around 30 percent annually and compensation is the primary reason given for leaving ECE settings and the ECE sector. In comparison, the turnover rate for K-12 teachers is about half or 15%, and is primarily driven by the work environment.³³ Teachers have been found to be more likely to leave their jobs if they earned lower wages, worked in an environment with less stability of highly trained co-workers, and worked with a greater percentage of teachers without bachelor's degrees.³⁴

Figure 5.



ECE programs tend to be small, standalone businesses. As such, they don't achieve economies of scale, and they often operate without the rigor of structured human resources policies and procedures and/or strategic financial planning. ECE providers must maximize revenue sources, maximize revenue per child, maximize use of space, and minimize expenses in order to put as many resources as possible into teacher compensation. However, ECE employers responding to the ECEWTI online survey question regarding salary scales indicated that just more than half (53% of 47 respondents) have a salary scale in place. Of the 44 that answered the increment question, 66% provide staff with regular salary increases. In a recent Child Trends report examining the impact of the Success By 6 quality improvement program, the authors report that 7 out of 10 partners would like TA consultants to have more experience with specific consultations topics such as business practices.³⁵

Support for teacher professional development and planning time are critical aspects of workplace environment. In the ECE setting, where teachers work in pairs, communication and team building are additional elements of the work environment and culture that impact teacher satisfaction and retention. Work environments can support or hinder teacher performance and retention.³⁶ According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, "How well teachers interact with children requires attention to adult learning and well-being in the workplace."³⁷ Best practice workplace supports, clear and consistent communication, clear

roles and responsibilities, paid teacher planning times, and opportunities for on-the-job learning are not consistently available in Philadelphia’s ECE programs. In ECEWTI focus groups, teachers report that dysfunctional work place practices, such as frequent absences and the pressure to maintain ratios, frequently lead to turnover. Teachers also revealed that they are given little to no time for lesson planning as k-12 teachers are; as a result, many take work home and work hours for which they are not compensated.

Figure 6.

Based on **findings** from the **ECE Employee Survey**, respondents identified the following ways to **increase satisfaction** with their organizations:

- Increase in salary
- Greater administrative support and respect
- Improved benefits
- Open communication both within the organization and with families
- More relevant, higher quality training
- Opportunity to advance within their organization
- Recognition of high-performing, qualified staff
- The availability of materials, supplies, and space
- Increase in funds to run the program

Teacher interactions, behaviors, and teaching practices are critical to the quality and effects of ECE and are influenced by such factors as the attitudes, education, training, compensation, and mental health of those adult teachers.³⁸ Teachers experiencing stress, depression, or other mental health issues are unable to effectively engage with children. Because compensation is low, ECE teachers are under financial pressure. “In 2012, nearly one-half (46 percent) of childcare workers, compared to 25 percent of the U.S. workforce, resided in families enrolled in at least one of four public support programs.”³⁹ Studies have consistently found the incidence and persistence of depression to be higher among persons with low incomes.⁴⁰ Symptoms of depression in ECE teachers are associated with lower sensitivity and increased withdrawal in adult–child interactions.⁴¹ ECE teacher symptoms of depression may also interfere with the development of healthy self-regulation in children, which, in turn, could affect school readiness.⁴²

A study of women working in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in Pennsylvania⁴³ revealed that the prevalence of physical and mental health conditions, fair or poor health status, and frequent mentally and physically unhealthy days were higher than among employed women in a national sample of women of similar age, education, race/ethnicity, and marital status, resulting in missed days at work. We know that the healthy development of children in ECE is correlated with not only adults being physically and emotionally engaged but also on being consistently present at work.⁴⁴ Low ECE teacher compensation creates a chain reaction of financial stress, emotional stress, health problems, and work absences, resulting in poor outcomes for children.

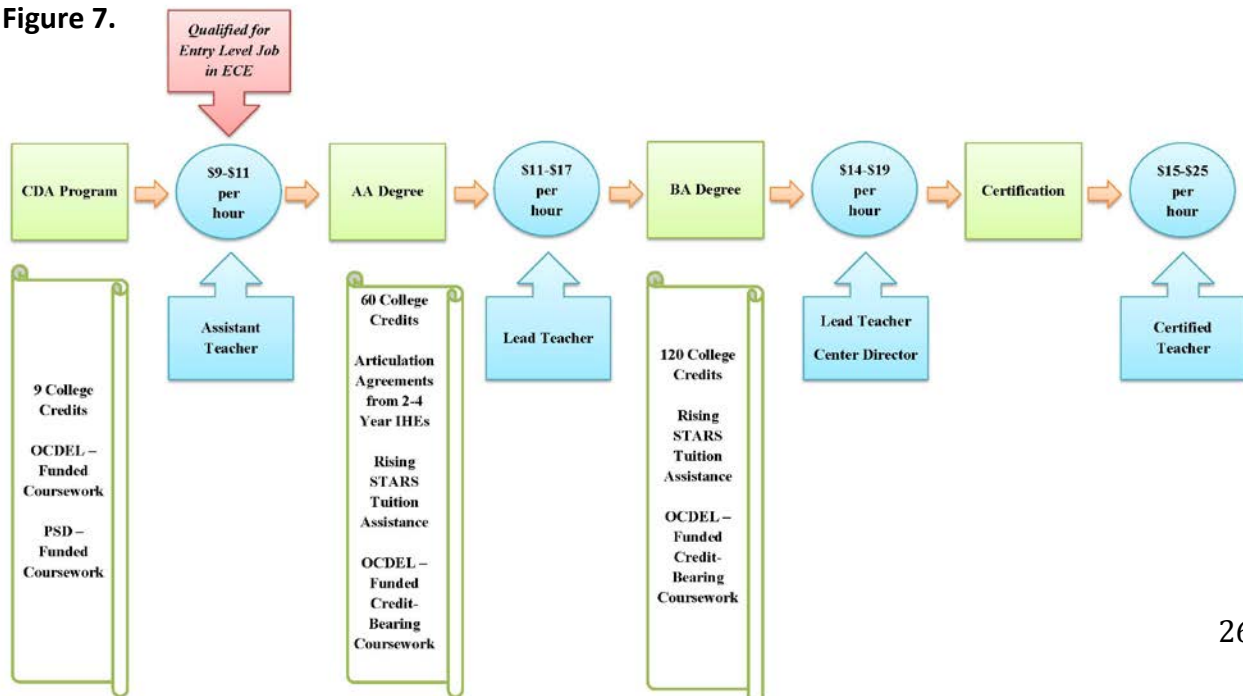
ECE Workforce Advancement

Advancement for the ECE workforce is challenging because the career pathway in ECE does not result in salary levels that compensate for the time and cost of further education and credential attainment. In spite of multiple professional development, certification, credit-bearing course work, and scholarship programs available, the current workforce is generally not financially motivated to pursue additional education.

Of the approximately 40 ECE technical assistance providers who participated in ECEWTI focus group discussions, nearly all cited the cost of a degree relative to wages as the single largest issue preventing teachers from continuing their education. Other important barriers were identified, including a lack of advertising and outreach by local ECE teacher preparation programs; the strain on centers when teachers want time off to attend training and classes; and the difficulty of comparing different programs and accessing information to tuition and other financial support for continued education.

The ECE Career Pathway shown below is available only to those few staff that work in the highest quality programs, as these employers pay the highest rates to their teachers and address the other issues raised in the previous paragraph.

Figure 7.



Teacher Retention & Advancement • Recommendations

➡ **Provide technical assistance to providers in operating more efficiently and drawing down multiple sources of funding so that they can direct more funding to staff compensation.**

ECE providers require assistance implementing best practices in financial management, human resources, facilities planning, marketing, and workplace environments. ECEWTI created a salary scale and a cost-modeling tool for providers to use to calculate the cost of quality for each age group of children they serve. By maximizing revenue and minimizing all non-personnel related expenses, providers can offer more competitive compensation to teachers, annual salary increments, and a positive work environment to include paid teacher planning time.

As discussed by the local ECE workforce during the focus groups our team conducted this year, ECE providers typically have multiple contracts with multiple funding sources. In order to effectively “braid” funding, providers must combine multiple funding sources in support of individual children. This requires automated tracking, cost allocation, and detailed invoicing and payment reconciliation. While maximizing revenue sources per child can allow providers to approach earning a combined rate that is nearly high enough to compensate teachers fairly, it requires administrative and fiscal tools and expertise that are beyond the reach of many. Employers and TA providers, during the ECEWTI data collection process, confirmed these limited capabilities. Therefore, it is important to ensure that practical and comprehensive TA is available to meet the business/operational needs of providers who are challenged on this front.

➡ **Work with OCDEL to ensure that child care subsidy rates are based on cost calculations that include appropriate salaries.**

While the underlying issue to workforce challenges is the reported pervasive and persistent problem of low compensation, our ability to infuse the ECE industry with significantly higher levels of public investments to support higher compensation is a long and multi-year strategy. There is however, a new opportunity to be found in the recently reauthorized Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the single largest source of ECE funding in the nation.⁴⁵

Historically, rates of reimbursement for subsidized child care were set by conducting periodic market surveys of private pay rates for child care, with a recommendation that the public rates approach or reach the 75th percentile of the private market. Most often states have not met

this 75% recommendation, instead paying closer to 50% of the private market. This “market based” system is fundamentally flawed, because parents of young children are simply not able to pay the true cost of care.⁴⁶

Under the new guidelines for CCDF, Pennsylvania has elected an alternative method for setting reimbursement rates. This method, called “cost modeling,” allows for calculating the per child cost by creating budget scenarios with expenses that reflect the true cost of providing this service. Based on case study data collected through this project, as well as data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau and the School District of Philadelphia website, we believe that OCDEL should consider the following factors in generating these fiscal scenarios in order to create a new, competitive ECE industry standard for teacher compensation:

- Benefit costs should double to a minimum of 30% of the value of salaries;
- Substitute teacher costs should be minimally budgeted at 6% of teacher costs to ensure that providers consistently achieve ratio, including when regular, full-time and part-time teachers take paid time off, are out sick, or attend professional development;
- Salaries for teachers in the Philadelphia region with BAs should increase to \$32,000;
- Salaries for certified teachers in the region should increase to \$50,000.

 **Fund research to pilot and study the impact of the integration of occupational health and safety practices (wellness, stress reduction and self-care) into ECE settings**

In addition to working to reduce the financial stress borne by the current ECE workforce through increased compensation, we recommend further study related to integration of mindfulness practices into ECE settings. These practices may increase the mental wellbeing of ECE teachers, as has been the case with K-12 teachers,⁴⁷ thereby increasing their retention and effectiveness.⁴⁸ CARE for Teachers – Garrison Institute has implemented and studied the impacts of providing specific instruction and skill building to teachers regarding emotions and the regulation of emotions in support of classroom environment and learning. Research, including a large cluster randomized controlled trial, reveals that compared to classrooms in the control group, CARE classrooms were more emotionally positive and the teachers demonstrated greater sensitivity to their students’ needs. CARE has been shown to significantly improve well-being and reduce stress among participating teachers compared to the teachers in a randomly assigned control group.⁴⁹

 **Increase access to credentials for incumbent workers through:**

- **Apprenticeship programs that tie increased skill/education attainment to higher wages;**
- **Credit for prior learning options that accelerate education pathways.**

The apprenticeship model has been used effectively in other fields to attract workers and to promote workers through a coordinated progression of course work and on the job learning.⁵⁰ Similar to programs in Vermont and California,^{51 52} an ECE apprenticeship could assist full-time

ECE workers with CDAs attain a bachelor's degree at an accelerated pace of approximately 2.5 years. The apprenticeship components would include:

- Bridge program to prepare participants for college level work;
- IHE partner willing to provide: a certificate of accomplishment at completion of 30 hours; an Associate's at 60 hours; course credit for the CDA: course credit for on-the-job learning; course credit for a capstone project; and willingness to waive entrance fees and exams;
- ECE employer(s) committed to specific HR practices in support of apprenticeship including wage steps;
- Mentor training for on-site supervisors.

Research from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning indicates that the evaluation for college credit of the knowledge and skills one gains from life experiences has been shown to: increase graduation rates among adults in college; increase persistence; and shorten time to a degree.⁵³ The evaluation of prior learning can take several forms, including: examinations, evaluation of non-college training, and individual student portfolios. In Oregon the state has established a means by which to award college credit for prior learning and experience at a system, rather than individual level. The registry rates teachers along steps that community colleges use to determine the number of credits that will be awarded and the subject areas to which those credits apply. The credits are applied as electives related to ECE, not as general education electives.⁵⁴ Participation in apprenticeship and prior learning assessment programs is included in the IHE ECE Gold Standard, as another means of emphasizing the importance of finding creative ways to assist the current workforce progress along the ECE career and education pathway.

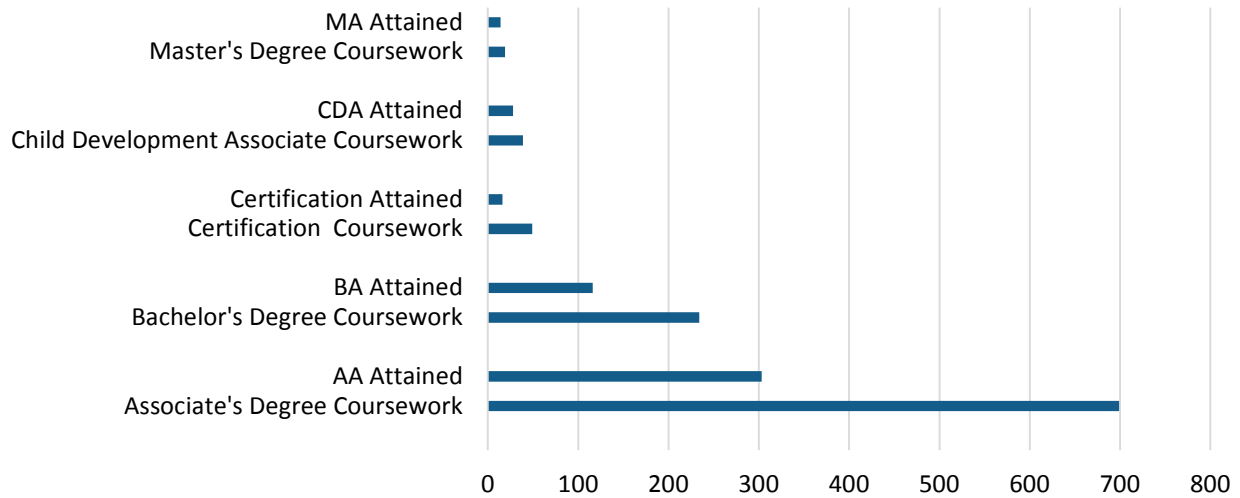
Study the impact of career advising and tuition assistance programs in helping teachers earn BAs and teacher certification.

In the past, career advising had been provided as part of the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) scholarship program, but this program is no longer available in Pennsylvania. T.E.A.C.H. was a resource that individual teachers (perhaps with the support of their Director) accessed in order to develop a personalized education plan and to get assistance in addressing the personal barriers to realizing that plan, such as funds to purchase books or child care for their own children while in class. According to the Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA), on average, 100% of T.E.A.C.H. scholarship participants utilized the T.E.A.C.H. travel stipend, 80-85% utilized book supports, 75% of center participants and 95% of family child care providers accessed release time supports.

Our team's collected anecdotal data regarding T.E.A.C.H. is positive, but data regarding the efficacy of the program in helping Philadelphia teachers earn BAs and certification is mixed. During the 5.5 year period examined, T.E.A.C.H. paid for 32,288 credits for 1,042 Philadelphia teachers. Of these, approximately 46% (482 teachers) graduated with a degree or credential during this time period; and 63% of all degrees attained were Associate's Degrees.

Figure 8.

T.E.A.C.H. Data in Philadelphia County (5.5 years from July 2006 - December 2011)



Currently, the Rising STARS tuition assistance program supports the cost of some credit-bearing course work for teachers in participating STARS programs, but does not include career advising or ancillary services. Initiated in 2014, the Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program pays 95% of tuition costs for eligible college coursework taken by ECE teachers, with a maximum benefit of \$6,000 per individual each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). The program covers tuition costs only, and does not include books, materials, or fees. Tuition costs net of other funding sources such as scholarships, stipends, discounts or grants (except Pell Grants) are used to determine the amount of assistance. Eligibility criteria for applicants include: stated residency (PA resident), length of employment (worked for STARS program for 12 months or more), and salary limit of \$40,000 for teachers. Eligible coursework must be credit bearing and must be conducted by an accredited college/university located in Pennsylvania or an approved online institution. A separate application must be completed for each course the student is applying to take, and must be received four weeks prior to the beginning of class. Finally, a student's overall GPA, including all courses taken, must be 3.0 or higher. After the initial application for Rising STARS Tuition Assistance, applicants must include a transcript with each future application. If a student's GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be ineligible for funding until they can bring their GPA up to a 3.0 by taking classes funded through other sources. According to leadership at the Southeast Regional Key, across the Commonwealth this resource is currently under-utilized. Preliminary data from a 2016 PACCA survey indicate that the 137 respondents found Rising STARS program's cap on the amount paid per course too low, the salary cap for access to Rising STARS too low, and the paperwork requirements onerous. These factors, in addition to the budget delay, may explain this underutilization. Overall PACCA's analysis of survey results is that the Rising STARS Tuition Assistance is working for a

small sector of the workforce; however additional and more substantial supports such as T.E.A.C.H. are needed for the majority of the workforce to be successful in moving up the career lattice and achieving their educational goals, incrementally over time while continuing to work in the field.

Without T.E.A.C.H. the career advising function for ECE staff most typically falls to Directors. According to ECE focus group discussion, this is a burden for these already over-burdened individuals, and none of them is able to develop or maintain the individual contacts and resources related to IHEs and scholarships that were previously available via T.E.A.C.H.

While theoretically career advising could be a TA service, the current Keystone STARS TA system is not designed to work with individual staff. Instead the system targets center-based goals around meeting STARS standards. There is no mechanism in the TA database for tracking goals at the individual teacher level, and the shift from center-based to individual-teacher-level TA would be significant. However, in the current environment, in which OCDEL is leading major initiatives to increase integration of OCDEL-funded services and supports, re-vision Keystone STARS, and re-vision STARS TA, even such a significant change could be possible. Boston's career coaching may be a model for Pennsylvania to replicate. Coaches employed by the Boston Alliance for Early Education and Associated Early Care and Education are contracted by the Thrive in Five program to provide professional development and education support to ECE teachers using a common intake form. While coaches generally spend one to two hours per month with each teacher on their caseloads, they also offer group/cohort coaching and professional development.⁵⁵

As expressed by local directors during ECEWTI data collection, the challenge of providing pre-service training to in-service staff (as is the case with incumbent workers) is herculean, particularly given the current lack of financial remuneration within ECE for degree attainment. Further study regarding the impact of previous and existing models of career advising and tuition supports, as well as discussion of alternatives (such as a focus on completion of the infant-toddler certification that is currently being developed in Pennsylvania for the incumbent non-degreed workforce) is needed.

CONCLUSION

As national and international research continues to promote the importance and value of quality ECE, incremental improvements in and expansion of Philadelphia's ECE system occur. However, large-scale ECE expansion is dependent upon a highly skilled workforce. Locally this workforce is not in place, nor even in the pipeline, due to poor compensation and a myriad of related factors such as workplace environment and teacher preparation.

Fully addressing the issue of ECE teacher compensation requires the significant change of shifting more of the financial responsibility for early learning from the private to public sectors, and increasing the overall amount of the public investment. There are many more immediate, local initiatives that have the potential to advance teacher compensation, preparation, recruitment and retention to better support positive child outcomes as the longer-term work around just pay and public financing unfolds. Coordinated local, regional, and federal strategies based on ECEWTI project findings have the potential to incrementally realize key aspects of the ECE workforce transformation envisioned.

By piloting the projects and recommendations proposed in this report, we believe that Philadelphia will be positioned so that:

- ECE providers can maximize revenues, and pay teachers more.
- Existing teacher preparation programs can increase their enrollment and meet the ECE Gold Standard.
- New teacher preparation programs can support the sector through new business models.
- The ECE workforce can become more diverse.
- Youth oriented teacher preparation programs can increase their enrollment and form closer ties to the ECE sector; graduate more CDAs; connect graduates to the ECE Career and Education Pathway.
- A higher percentage of students in teacher preparation programs can choose to specialize in P-4 and to work in ECE settings.
- More individuals with Bachelor's Degrees can pursue P-4 certification.
- Teachers can remain on the job and can better meet the needs of their students and families.
- Teachers can advance in their careers and earn more as they do so.
- More families can access quality ECE.

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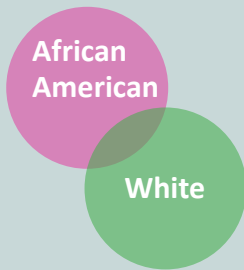
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ECE Teacher 1.0

ECE Teacher 2.0



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