



INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH,  
EDUCATION, AND FAMILIES



## Cities Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce



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### **About the Institute**

Since its' founding in 2000, the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) has been the nation's leading source of information and support for city efforts to improve early care and education, strengthen city-school partnerships, and promote joint planning initiatives between city governments, school districts, and private industry. This wide-ranging experience, when combined with NLC's extensive peer and membership networks, creates unique opportunities for the YEF Institute to share lessons learned with city leaders nationwide and to stimulate new city-level efforts to make evidence based best practices work in real world settings at the local level.

### **About School Readiness Consultants**

School Readiness Consulting improves the lives of young children and their families by partnering with states, cities, school districts, non-profit organizations, and foundations in pursuit of improving school readiness. Their comprehensive approach focuses on supporting best practice in teaching and leadership, advising and communicating on behalf of system-level efforts, and executing rigorous evaluation of early childhood initiatives. With amazing skill and understanding of local collaboration and systems building efforts, they conducted interviews and summarized findings that contributed to the development of this Brief.

### **About the Foundation for Child Development (FCD)**

The Foundation for Child Development (FCD) identifies needs, fills gaps and integrates knowledge for successful implementation and continuous improvement. FCD connects research, policy and practice to help build early childhood systems that enable children to reach their full potential. For over 100 years, the foundation has been building better lives for young children. They identify needs and fill gaps by connecting research to changes that continuously improve policy and practice; they identify areas of child well-being and development where there is little to no research, and provide funding to fill those gaps and build new fields of knowledge; and they think strategically about how policy can be leveraged to positively affect children's lives.

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# Introduction

**M**any factors influence the quality of child care and early education programs, but perhaps none matter more than the education and experience of early childhood providers. Developing the workforce in early care and education is central to the delivery of high-quality experiences and environments for young children. With generous support from the Foundation for Child Development (FCD), the National League of Cities (NLC) executed the two-year *Cities Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative* with Hartford, Connecticut; Jacksonville, Florida; Kansas City, Missouri; Richmond, Virginia; and Rochester, New York, along with two faculty cities – San Francisco and Seattle.

This work was designed to help cities deepen efforts to support the early childhood workforce by promoting strong government, aligning professional development opportunities and mobilizing key stakeholders to leverage increased support for the early childhood workforce. NLC gathered information about how a select group of cities professionalizes and supports the early childhood workforce through early learning policies and initiatives; how existing governance structures support this work and what the key challenges are to supporting the early childhood workforce at the local level.

This brief will draw upon learnings from the *Cities Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative* and explore the issues facing the people who provide the care and education in settings where young children are cared for when they are not with their parents – relatives, neighbors, home-based child care providers, day care centers, preschools and early elementary school classrooms. The brief includes resources, strategies, ideas and examples to help elected officials and city leaders who are responsible for leading local initiatives to support the workforce in ways that improve outcomes for children and strengthen their local economic future.



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a child is sitting at a table, focused on drawing with a marker on a piece of paper. The table is cluttered with various art supplies, including several markers, a small container of crayons, and some geometric blocks. In the background, other children are visible, some standing and some sitting, in a room with colorful posters on the wall. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# Making the Case for Early Childhood Workforce Support

City leaders are responsible for promoting a city's economic vitality, making it a place where their constituents can be productive, engaged citizens. They are best positioned to champion the issues of the early education workforce because they are closer to constituents and more in touch with their challenges than state and federal policymakers. Unlike public education, which generally is governed by a separate school board, early childhood care is an area where city leaders can and must have an impact.

None of the benefits that occur when children experience high-quality early childhood education would be possible without the hard-working professionals who educate and care for young children. City leaders increasingly turn their attention to support the people who provide early education care, exploring ways to provide better training, resources, and compensation for the early childhood education workforce. From elementary school teachers with master's degrees to child care center employees, neighbors and grandparents, the early childhood workforce is often poorly paid and has limited access to professional development and support. These providers – almost all women, many women of color – are the key to providing high-quality care to children.

For all communities, the urgency of the need for a public response is clear. If we are to support pathways to self-sufficiency for parents, child care providers and the children in their care – an effective way to end cycles of generational poverty – we must address the issue facing the early childhood education workforce.



# City Governance Matters

No two cities will approach the early childhood workforce in exactly the same way. A community of 2,000 residents in a rural area will have different workforce needs than a large metropolitan area. Some communities are home to several major universities while others are not even served by a community college. Some communities have a wealth of potential nonprofit partners, while others may be the only game in town.

Some cities have strong mayors who can launch new initiatives on their own, while others operate with a city manager form of government. Some city council members are able to sponsor programs themselves, while those in other communities must build political support to get the entire City Council on board. Cities in Dillon Rule states face different challenges than those with home rule.

## Faculty Cities

Cities with a long work history with NLC and with successful experience working in a particular area often serve as faculty on technical assistance projects. San Francisco and Seattle applied expertise and experience to join NLC staff in providing content for technical assistance. Faculty cities also learn alongside colleagues during the technical assistance process and often use new information/ideas to further refine local work.

### Areas of Focus:

#### San Francisco

- **Creating professional-development pathways:** Work has been focused on building better alignment across teacher-preparation programs and classroom practice.
- **Addressing compensation:** City leaders are working to increase wages and compensation parity.
- **Improving the professional experience and working conditions:** Addressing working conditions is considered a core issue in building workforce capacity. *“No one ever enters this field because of the pay. They are pushed out because of working conditions and unreasonable job expectations. Work standards can push people out.”*

#### Seattle

- **Building the capacity of the ECE workforce without displacing current workforce members:** The city placed a priority on supporting career advancement and workforce capacity by meeting people where they are and training them in the best approaches to teaching and improving child outcomes.
- **Creating opportunities and support to meet Seattle pre-K teacher requirements:** The program focuses on job-embedded coaching, financial support, and articulation agreements with higher education.





## Actions Taken:

### San Francisco

Much of the work for the NLC workforce project centered on recommendations within the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education 2018 report *Professional Development System Recommendations*, which included the following:

- **Increase access to college through** creation of centralized information materials on career pathways and by developing a general-education transfer program from community college to four-year institutions designed to meet the needs of new or existing ECE providers who have academic-skill-building needs.
- **Improve compensation and wage parity by:**
  - Focusing on the provision of paid release time for participation in professional-development opportunities.
  - Using existing wage and workforce data included in the California ECE Workforce Registry to inform the revision of the current wage scale. In 2017, the city ended the C-Wages program and integrated support into a reimbursement model through Early Learning Scholarships. Revised wage standards as part of this reimbursement model will be developed soon.
- **Address challenges to recruitment and retention by** creating a retention bonus. The bonus creates an incremental step toward pre-K parity by providing a \$5,000 three-year annual bonus for teachers in subsidized programs.

### Seattle

- **Job-embedded coaching:** The Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) employs a cadre of classroom coaches who use a relationship-based approach to improve instructional practice and child outcomes.
- **Teacher scholarships for continuing education:** Current SPP teachers who do not meet credential requirements are eligible for up to \$10,000 per year for tuition and supplies.
- **Improved access to degree programs:** A local Seattle community college developed a Bachelor of Applied Science in ECE that moves from a terminal AA degree in ECE to a BA by offering additional core classes.
- **Alternative pathway for degree attainment:** Through Antioch University, Seattle educators with 10+ years of experience and high Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores can participate in a program based on the teacher's portfolio and focused heavily on family connections and culturally responsive teaching.
- **Training institutes:** Throughout the year, three training institutes support networking, resource sharing, and teacher professional-learning communities.

# The Major Focus of the Workforce Efforts in the Cohort Cities

NLC worked with five city teams along with two faculty cities to make support for the early childhood education (ECE) workforce a priority for city leadership and to create more comprehensive professional development opportunities and pathways. The goal of the project was to help develop local programs and policies that will ensure all early childhood educators have tools and support needed to provide high-quality early learning experiences for children and equitable access to building their own skills and knowledge. Each city identified a focal point for their local early childhood workforce efforts.

## Areas of Focus:

### Hartford

- **Understanding the needs and building the capacity of the ECE workforce:** The city placed a high priority on meeting teacher requirements and improving instructional practices as a means to improve child outcomes.
- **Matching workforce support to workforce requirements:** City leaders understand that accountability for teacher credentialing requires support to help educators meet expectations. The city cannot hold educators accountable if educators are not given support.

### Jacksonville

- **Professionalizing the workforce:** The team focused on aligning workforce development efforts delivered across three primary agencies in the city—the Early Learning Coalition of Duval, Kids Hope Alliance (KHA) and Episcopal Children’s Services.
- **Providing standards-based training:** Agencies must provide training to build provider qualifications, knowledge, and competencies aligned to voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) and state ECE standards.
- **Creating wage incentives:** Providers who participate in the quality-rating system receive bonuses based on the number of accredited training programs they participate in. Authorized training helps ensure professionalization.
- **Offering CDA training:** Agencies are offering scholarships and CDA training, and CDA credentials now articulate with community college courses.
- **Providing job-embedded professional development:** This approach eliminates barriers to participation from teachers who cannot leave the classroom.



## Actions Taken:

### Hartford

- **Conducted a workforce analysis:** The project team conducted a citywide analysis that included both school-based and community-based pre-K teachers. Work engaged the Hartford Public Schools and the local workforce-development board to gain the broadest understanding of the current conditions, needs, and opportunities. Findings included a need to address the following.
  - **Compensation:** A major challenge to creating a more holistic approach to professional development and career advancement was differentials in compensation between school-system and center-based providers.
  - **Articulated career pathways:** There was a need for a more articulated continuum of career advancement and training pathways that include interim steps/benchmarks between currently available credentials and degree levels.

### Jacksonville

- **Focused on supporting coaches:** The Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida is training and credentialing coaches with the goal of improving teacher performance. The Lastinger Center is also working with coaches to facilitate learning communities with program directors.
- **Professionalize teachers through job-embedded training:** Teachers have options for selecting online training and coaching or in-person training.
- **Look for opportunities to embed wage incentives in new policies:** New state law requires Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) assessments in all programs receiving school-readiness funds. The team is investigating opportunities to tie wage incentives to the new system.
- **Support CDA credentialing:** T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships for CDA training. KHA is also offering cohort-based training that includes site visits and support for those who test low on reading and writing skills to help them become eligible for college credit.



# The Major Focus of the Workforce Efforts (continued)

## Areas of Focus:

### Kansas City

- **Meeting new workforce requirements created with the passage of a pre-K tax initiative:** Passage of the initiative created the need for 200 new four-year-credentialed teachers. Tax-generated funds will support infrastructure plus provide funds for the professional development needed to support credential requirements for teachers.
- **Creating articulated career pathways:** Work to support expanding and enhancing current workforce capacity has been focused on articulation and what it will take to create a seamless career-advancement pathway to meet the needs of ECE educators and the community.

### Richmond

- **Focusing on ECE as an anti-poverty and economic-development issue:** The Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB), which originated in the mayor's office, is an initiative charged with addressing the needs of children and families living in high-poverty areas. The goal is to address key components of a system that could elevate families out of poverty. ECE is one of the focus areas and addresses both the importance of ECE for children's success but also as a necessity for parents and caregivers seeking training and employment.
- **Focusing on informal childcare networks:** The project team focused on building programs and provider quality for family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care providers in high-poverty areas of the city.

### Rochester

- **Calling attention to the importance and needs of the ECE workforce:** The project team convened a city-wide ECE summit designed to increase ECE recognition, identify workforce needs, and engage new stakeholders in the efforts to support ECE and the workforce.
- **Addressing educator well-being:** As a result of recommendations generated at the summit, a working group convenes to address workforce well-being and working conditions.
- **Providing professional development to address the unmet needs of teachers entering the field:** Based on a survey of new teachers' knowledge and skills, a working group develops pre-service training to boost new teachers' understanding of basic child development and provide them with practical, classroom-based experiences.

## Actions Taken:

### Kansas City

- **Analyzing needs and opportunities:** The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) created working groups to study teacher competencies and training quality and to create an articulated pipeline from high school through higher education.
- **Creating a system of stackable credentials:** The University of Central Missouri was an early adopter of the EarlyEdU Alliance, which provides supplementary support and opportunities for ECE educators to access training. Using EarlyEdU coursework, the university piloted a series of three stackable credentials that lead to a Bachelor of Arts degree in ECE. To further support this alternative pathway, a cohort model was encouraged and tuition was significantly reduced.
- **Securing funding for credentialing:** Project leaders sought resources and funding to support participation in the EarlyEdU credentialing program. A number of funding mechanisms are in place and efforts are underway to investigate opportunities for blending funds. Scholarships are provided through the Full Employment Council and KC Scholars. As the local Head Start grantee, MARC utilizes Head Start Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) funds to support three teachers in the cohort.
- **Implementing the Leading Men Fellowship:** Kansas City began implementing a Leading Men Fellowship in January 2019. Though participants were initially trained as tutors, the longer-term goal is to help them transition into an ECE teacher-preparation pathway.

### Richmond

- **Elevated issues of equity as related to accessing ECE:** The OCWB was a new voice at the ECE table. Staff changed the dialogue about access and affordability by challenging the notion that families do not understand the importance of quality ECE. The team developed a provider survey and convened focus groups in communities to discuss high-quality ECE and what equitable access would look like.

- **Focused on “professionalizing” and building skills and knowledge of FFN providers:** Partnered with ChildSavers—the local quality-rating agency—to conceptualize a quality informal network and offered trauma-informed training. Partnership with the library enabled Mind in the Making trainings. ECE career pathways and teacher credential requirements considered how to create on-ramps for informal providers to boost quality.

### Rochester

- **Convened an ECE summit focused on workforce support and recognition:** Convened by the mayor, the summit included a proclamation of support for the ECE workforce offered by the city and county, elevating the importance of the workforce and recognizing accomplishments of individual teachers. As a result of city government outreach and new stakeholders at the summit, the city made important connections and diversified its group of stakeholders. The most-relevant issues surfaced during carefully planned and populated discussion tables.
- **Developed pre-service professional development for ECE teachers entering the field:** A district-level working group develops an eight-module pre-service training program to address perceived gaps in ECE teacher-preparation programs. The project team supports work to develop a non-credit bearing, pre-service training curriculum to address these gaps. Modules are being piloted upon development.
- **Create a workforce wellness survey:** In an effort to include teacher voices in planning forms of support, the team works with partners to develop a survey and seeks the mayor’s engagement in dissemination.





# ECE Workforce Challenges in the Cohort Cities

## **Tackling compensation and teacher well-being:**

- Balancing teacher education requirements and program-quality expectations with teacher support for meeting expectations
- Identifying and implementing sustainable funding mechanisms to support compensation and wage parity
- Understanding and addressing challenges related to teacher recruitment and retention

## **Creating career pathways**

- Establishing systems or pathways that include multiple entry and exit points for working educators
- Creating alternative degree and credential programs for nontraditional learners and those needing additional basic-education support

- Building the pipeline of early-childhood educators by creating career-advancement opportunities starting in high school
- Working with institutions of higher education to align courses and field experiences with the knowledge and competencies needed for teachers entering the field

## **Ensuring equity and addressing issues of social justice**

- Recognizing the inherent challenges faced by the current ECE workforce that is predominantly composed of low-income women of color
- Ensuring the current ECE workforce is not forced out as a result of new teacher education requirements





## Advice from City Team Leaders

Over the course of the project, the teams in various cities developed a deep understanding of the work and can offer a valuable set of key considerations for other cities that want to develop and support their ECE workforce. These insights are reflected in many of the issues raised throughout the interview process:

- **Pay attention to character attributes when organizing a team:** The commitment, passion, and vision of those involved and their understanding that change takes time will impact the success of ECE workforce development efforts.
- **Work to get mayors and other city leaders engaged:** Most cities recognized the value of gaining mayoral support as a means to move agendas, maintain credibility, and attract other stakeholders. Cities recommended identifying a neutral convener to lead efforts.
- **Establish and sustain partnerships:** Some cities specifically recommended the establishment of cross-agency cooperation and alignment of efforts. Others encouraged working to ensure that representation at decision-making tables was diverse and equitable. One city noted the benefit of having nontraditional partners from city government engaged and another encouraged cities to use national networks such as NLC to create cross-city learning communities.
- **Prioritize the gathering of practitioners' voices:** The importance of ensuring that practitioner voices are heard was restated.
- **Recognize the elephants in the room:** While admitting to the complexity and political ramifications of taking on difficult issues, San Francisco addressed the importance of focusing on major challenges to the ECE workforce such as low compensation and difficult working conditions.

# What City Leaders Across the Country Can Do

## 1. Use the bully pulpit and your own influence.

Elected officials can champion this issue, whether through holding a mayoral summit on the early childhood workforce or creating and promoting short videos of early childhood educators talking about the importance of the work they do or declaring the ECE workforce a top city priority.

## 2. Convene and build new partnerships.

Successful city efforts rely on effective partnerships with other organizations and agencies to make the most of existing resources while increasing support for ECE. Explore ways the city can support partner agencies – through contracts, shared expenses, collaborative grants, or streamlined processes.

## 3. Apply an intentional equity lens to the early childhood workforce.

Cities can conduct a racial equity analysis specific to their early childhood workforce and gain information about the equity impact of any policy or program related to the workforce. Maintain a critical eye toward the diversity of every group of stakeholders convened around this issue: who is missing from a spot at the table?

## 4. Seek input from early childhood educators.

Conduct focus groups with members of the early childhood workforce to understand their unique challenges – and strengths. Make sure to include home-based child care providers and family, friend and neighbor providers. Ensure that provider voices are consistently heard at City Council meetings and other public forums.

**5. Collect local data about your community's early childhood workforce.** Good data is critical to understanding the status of the early childhood workforce, as is a landscape analysis of supports that currently do and do not exist. This knowledge is essential before beginning to make significant changes. Local universities can be very helpful in accessing such data.

**6. Support professional development opportunities.** If there are professional development opportunities already being offered by the school district for Pre-K teachers, can they be extended to community-based providers? Or the city can invest in evidence-based coaching to improve the quality of teacher-child interactions and the quality of early care and education programs.

**7. Build pathways to higher education and career advancement.** Begin having conversations about comprehensive, accessible pathways for early childhood educators, including pay increases for each step. Work with providers and with local universities, community colleges and workforce training organizations to increase their understanding of mutual benefits to such pathways.

**8. Support compensation.** City funds invested in pay incentives for providers can be linked to increases in quality, ensuring that providers who demonstrate excellence can be compensated appropriately. Accessible and robust tuition supports for early child care providers are critical to ensuring that tightened degree requirements will not have the unintentional consequence of displacing members of the early childhood workforce who have served as educators for years.

**9. Intentionally support family, friend, neighbor and home-based child care providers.** The early childhood education workforce is hard to quantify, as it includes not only elementary and preschool teachers and child care center workers, but also the informal arrangements families make for friends, family and neighbors to care for their children – often without pay.

# City Departments Making Early Childhood Workforce a City Priority

**M**unicipal governments have countless opportunities in their day-to-day operations to strengthen the early childhood system and promote support for the early childhood workforce. Cities vary widely in the arrangement of departments. Often, these activities are placed under the administrative umbrella of community or human services though each area generally retains its own identity. City leaders can employ many tools to build partnerships, access community expertise and create support for the early education workforce. City departments can adjust their practices and procedures to remove barriers and to create greater access, so that community child care solutions that are working well are not thwarted.

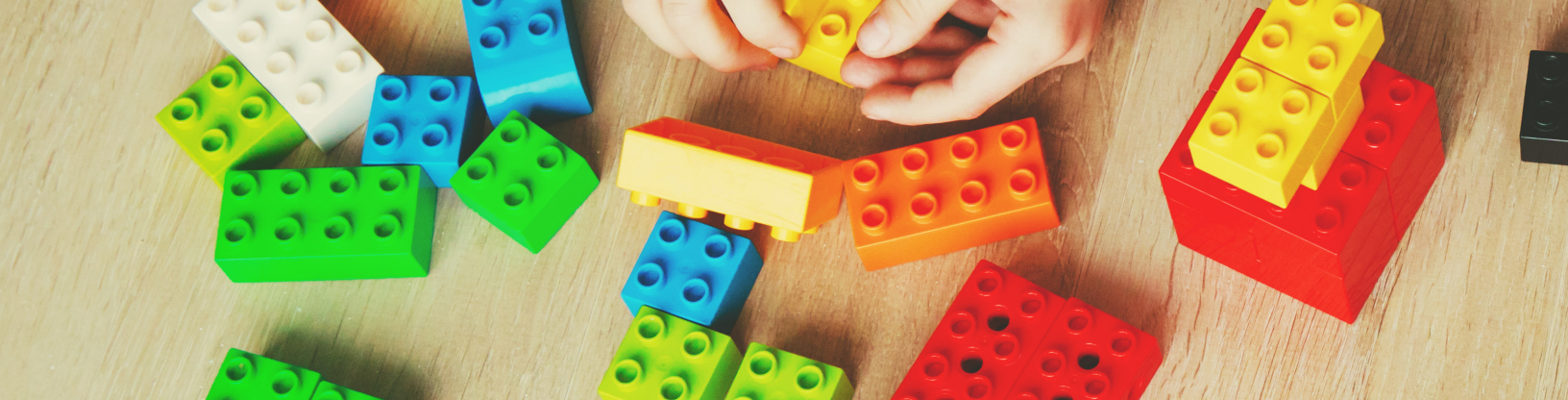
- City contracts whose purposes are to support the quality of childcare and the improvement of the childcare workforce are redesigned so that smaller, community-based organizations and institutions can compete for them.
- City job readiness programs can be adapted to provide child care training to home-based caregivers. Job placement programs and TANF programs may be able to offer tuition help for parents to pay neighbors or relatives to watch their children while they train.
- Parks and Recreation staff may be able to coordinate subsidized lunch and dinner funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, taking on the burden of paperwork and reporting by including providers with afterschool city programs. City pools and recreation centers may be able to offer passes to allow child care providers to access their services for children at a discounted rate.
- City anti-poverty programming can specifically address the needs of child care providers as a way to help them move out of poverty.
- Cities can determine if zoning regulations limit the ability of residents to provide quality child care in neighborhoods where it is most needed, and adjust those regulations accordingly.
- Quality assurances by home-based providers can be rewarded with fee waivers or additional capacity.
- A scan of city policies, along with feedback from a wide variety of service providers, parents and educators, can pinpoint if those policies are making it harder for home-based providers to get the support they need to provide quality care.



## Conclusion

Overwhelming research shows the long-lasting impact of high-quality early childhood education on the majority of American children who are regularly cared for by adults who are not their parents. Children who participate in high quality early learning experiences are more likely to do well in school, graduate, be healthy and achieve financial security than are children who do not have such experiences. The education and well-being of our children determine the overall vibrancy of our cities. To thrive, all children must receive high quality evidence-informed, intensive and continuous supports for active learning.

To varying degrees cities have begun to address the professional needs of early educators in the form of workshops on specific topics, scholarships to earn training certificates/degrees, specialists and coaches who visit classrooms, teacher peer learning groups, and city- wide trainings. Professional development programs might focus on what promotes child benefits, must be tailored to participants (experience, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs), should emphasize practice, and how to put new knowledge into action. In addition, a variety of cities across the nation are exploring strategies to attract, retain and improve the quality of early childhood caregivers and teachers through investments in wages, benefits and professional development. Helping to ensure that quality childcare and early education experiences are available to all our cities' residents must be a priority to city leaders looking to improve the local economy and quality of life in their communities.



# The Elevator Speech for City Leaders

## 1. The early childhood workforce as

**infrastructure:** Early childhood makes it possible for the current workforce to go to work, it builds the skills for the future workforce, and this is all made possible by the early childhood workforce. Early childhood opportunities are an important part of a city's infrastructure – just like roads and bridges, city residents can't get to work without them. We need to talk about the early childhood workforce with the same prioritization we put into other city infrastructure and take investments in this human infrastructure just as seriously.

## 2. Early childhood jobs as jobs of the future:

Early childhood jobs are job of the future – let's make sure they are quality jobs. Care and education jobs, such as those in early childhood education, cannot easily be automated or outsourced. However, too often early childhood educators lack the compensation, preparation and opportunities for career advancement to truly make these forward-thinking jobs of the future. We need to think systemically to increase pathways and credential opportunities for early childhood educators.

## 3. Early childhood educators as architects of your city's future:

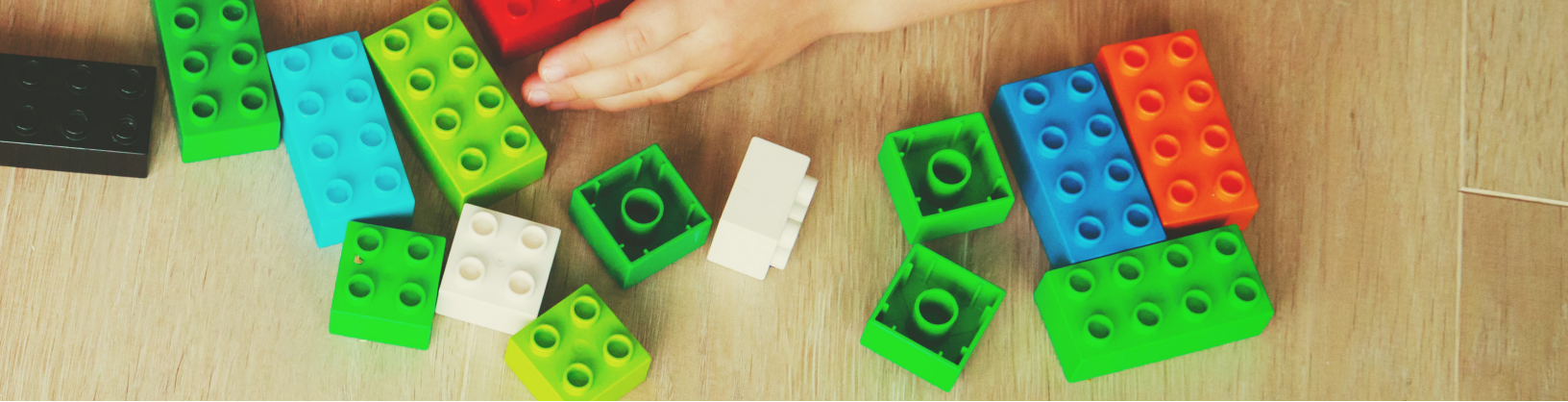
Neuroscience reveals a critical window of opportunity in which early experiences shape children's physical, social, and emotional development. If we want our children to possess the skills needed to meet the changing demands of work, serve in

the military and help our country compete globally, the work to prepare children for future success must start before children are even born. For many children, healthy development during these early years is deeply dependent on early childhood educators. In this way, early childhood educators are crucial to a city's successful workforce development. This workforce is consistently undervalued but in fact has the power to shape the military readiness and global competitiveness of our cities for generations to come. We need to give this workforce the supports, tools and compensation to do this.

**4. Early Childhood Educators as Promoters of Child Well-Being and Public Health:** Focusing on the science of brain development and the impact of early childhood education confirms the urgency of supporting children early in their development as well as the importance of high-quality early educational experiences.

**5. Early Childhood Workforce Support as a Worker Justice Issue:** With an ECE workforce that is 97 percent women and disproportionately women of color, adequate compensation and supports for this workforce builds equity, and with wages being nearly in the bottom of occupations ranked by earnings, it is a matter of worker justice.





## Relevant Facts

- Early childhood care receives far less public investment in the United States than in other industrialized countries.<sup>1</sup> As a result, American families with children spend almost a quarter of their net income (23 percent) on child care, almost twice as much as families in other similar countries (12 percent).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, child care providers in the United States are paid less, have fewer workplace benefits, and have less education and training than their counterparts elsewhere.
- Historically an unpaid job done by mothers and enslaved women and other women of color, child care has been long marked by low wages and inconsistent quality. In an economy where “women’s work” has generally been poorly paid, early childhood care has been at the bottom of the pay scale, though its providers perform some of the most important work in our society.
- The vast majority of the ECE workforce – 94 percent – is still comprised of women, and women of color are disproportionately represented among the lowest paid.<sup>3</sup> The Women’s Law Center notes that “in the U.S., child care is largely still viewed as women’s work and—in contrast to nearly every other developed nation in the world—as a private responsibility rather than a public good. Millions of parents find the cost of high-quality child care out of reach, even as millions of women, especially women of color, employed in the child care industry are living just above, or even below, the poverty line.”<sup>4</sup>
- The average early child care worker has 10 to 14 years of experience, and is paid an average hourly wage of \$10.60. Center-based caregivers work an average of 39 hours a week and have a slightly higher hourly pay; home-based caregivers average almost 54 hours a week. Most do not receive benefits, and almost half receive public assistance.<sup>5</sup>
- While providers with more education tend to be better paid, a child care worker with a bachelor’s degree still makes less (\$12.02) than her counterpart in other occupations (\$25.44 per hour).<sup>6</sup>
- Low-income parents are the most likely to use family, friend and neighbor care, so public efforts to improve care must address those who work in these settings. Such providers are often more affordable and accessible than center-based programs and may more closely reflect the culture and values of the family. Such settings are often the only care available outside the traditional hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., a critical need for parents whose shifts are unpredictable or whose hours fall outside the “9 to 5 workday” – common features of low-wage work.
- And many early childhood educators lack the preparation they need to be successful educators. Low wages impede the ability to go back to school and obtain increased credentials. Many early childhood education teacher preparation programs don’t provide enough hands-on training that is relevant to the classroom. Many home-based caregivers work extremely long hours, and may find it difficult to access supportive services and training. As a result, the quality of the educational experience of the children in their care may not be as high as it could be.

## Resources

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California at Berkeley, <http://cscce.berkeley.edu>

*Guiding Principles for the New Early Childhood Profession: Building on Strength and Competence*, Valora Washington and Brenda Gatson

National League of Cities, [Early Learning Communities Action Guide](#)

National League of Cities, [Equitable Early Care and Education: A Framework](#)

National League of Cities, Needs, Quality, and an Effective Child Care Workforce In a Growing Gig Economy Reflections and Observations, Betty Emarita, Development & Training, Inc., wCIF.org/file\_download/7df1e310-6ad9-4e2a-b1ae-6d2ae2c80675

[Collaborating to Support the Early Childhood Workforce](#), Courtney Argenti, Alana Eichner, Winona Hao, and Lauren Hogan

Katharine B. Stevens, Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High-Quality Childcare, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, June 2017. <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/workforce-oday-workforce-tomorrow>

Leading the Way: A Guide for Business Engagement in Early Education, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Center for Education and Workforce, 2018 - [https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20Workforce%20Toolkit\\_April%202018.pdf](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20Workforce%20Toolkit_April%202018.pdf)

NLC's blog, Cities Speak, "The Future of Work Begins with a City's Youngest Residents: <https://cityesspeak.org/2019/01/04/the-future-of-work-begins-with-a-citys-youngest-residents/>"

NLC's blog, Cities Speak, "Great Workforce Development Means Giving Children a Strong Start: <https://cityesspeak.org/2018/05/24/great-workforce-development-means-giving-children-a-strong-start/>"

Report from the Boston Consulting Group and Early Matters Dallas that uses city-level data in Dallas, Texas, to put dollar figures to the losses to a city economy and the middle skills job gap that results when parents can't access child care: <http://earlymattersdallas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Closing-the-Workforce-Gap-in-Dallas-small.pdf>

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## End Notes

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