

Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons from Seven States and Cities



Dr. Caitlin McLean



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Caitlin McLean, Ph.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California, Berkeley



February 26, 2018,
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood
National Center
Webinar



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Series on Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity

BRIEF

April 2017

Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity Series

CSCCE

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment
University of California, Berkeley

In partnership with

NIEER

National Institute for Early Education Research,
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey

In Pursuit of Pre-K Parity: A Proposed Framework for Understanding and Advancing Policy and Practice


By Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D. and Caitlin McLean, Ph.D.

Project Description: This brief is the first in a series of materials on pre-K compensation parity, jointly undertaken by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment and the National Institute for Early Education Research. This first brief evolved out of CSCCE's work for the State of the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative, a multi-year project to shine a steady spotlight on our nation's early childhood workforce on a state-by-state basis. In addition to the *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, the initiative consists of further resources for advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

Summary: Many pre-K teachers across the nation are expected to earn a bachelor's degree, similar to their peers teaching older children. Yet salaries and benefits remain consistently lower for pre-K teachers than for elementary school teachers. Increasingly, compensation parity is perceived as an achievable policy goal rather than a lofty ideal, yet there is confusion across the field about what parity means. This brief develops a framework for understanding compensation parity in contrast to other forms of compensation improvement. Applying this framework to current state efforts to move toward compensation parity reveals a great deal of variability across states. While some states approach compensation parity, at least for some pre-K teachers, and several states have pursued parity in salaries only, the majority of states do not have any explicit policies intended to move toward parity for pre-K teachers.

Key Findings:

- Compensation parity is defined as parity with K-3 teachers for salary and benefits for equivalent levels of education and experience, prorated to reflect differences in hours of work in private settings where applicable, and including payment for non-child contact hours (such as paid time for planning).
- Only Tennessee has compensation parity policies that apply to all pre-K lead and assistant teachers, but their pre-K program is delivered via public schools only.
- Ten states have compensation parity policies that include salary, benefits, and payment for professional responsibilities, at least for lead pre-K teachers in public schools.
- Eighteen states have policies in place with the goal of meeting salary parity, but only 14 states have policies that meet our criteria of salary parity, with equivalent starting salary and salary schedule, prorated.



Teacher Compensation Parity Policies and State-Funded Pre-K Programs

W. Steven Barnett & Richard Kasmin
NIEER, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

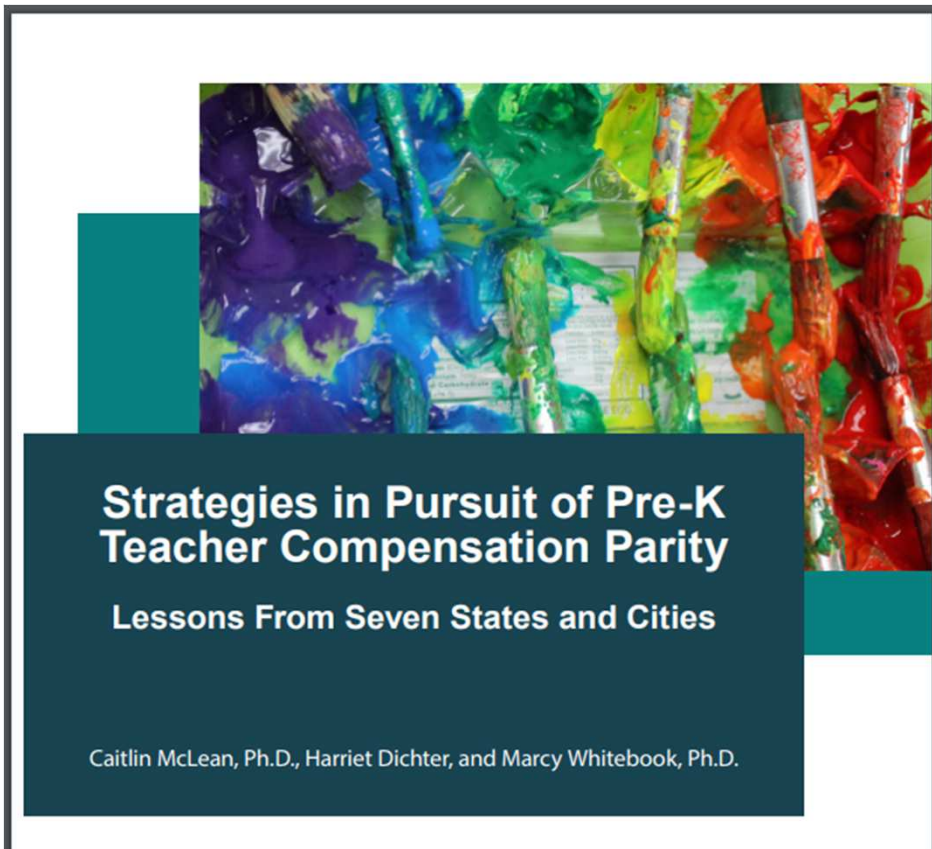
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<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/state-of-the-early-childhood-workforce/pre-k-parity/>

Series on Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity



STATE AND CITY PROFILES:

Alabama 

Georgia 

New Jersey 

New York City 

Oregon 

San Antonio 

West Virginia 

<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/state-of-the-early-childhood-workforce/pre-k-parity/>

Defining Compensation Parity

“‘Compensation parity’ is defined as parity for salary and benefits for equivalent levels of education and experience, adjusted to reflect differences in hours of work (particularly in private settings) and including payment for non-child contact hours (such as paid time for planning).”

Pre-K Parity Framework

Components of Compensation				
Type of Compensation Improvement	Salary		Benefits	Payment for Professional Responsibilities ¹⁷
	Starting Salary	Salary Schedule ¹⁶		
Parity (defined as equivalent)	Same, prorated for day length and number	Same, prorated for day length and number	Same package, same options for coverage for health, retirement, and vacation/holiday/sick leave	Same menu of supports and dosage for non-child contact responsibilities (e.g., planning time, professional development days)
Partial Parity (defined as equivalent for select components)	Same, prorated for day length and number	Not same or absent	Equivalent options for some benefits, but not full package of benefits	Equivalent options for some supports, but not full menu of supports
Sub-Parity (defined as similar but not equivalent)	Same, not prorated	Same, not prorated or not same/absent	Same package of benefits, not equivalent value	Same menu of supports, not equivalent value
Alternative Forms of Compensation Improvement	Strategies that improve pre-K compensation in order to close the gap with teachers of older children but fall well short of parity. In theory, compensation improvement strategies could also set goals higher than earnings of K-12 teachers in public schools, though in practice this is rare. ¹⁸			

Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons from Seven States and Cities

Alabama



Georgia



New Jersey



Oregon



New York City



West Virginia



San Antonio



Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-K Teacher Compensation Parity: Key findings

- No one model - states/cities doing what works in their context
- Road to parity is often incremental
- Positive outcomes: perceptions of better recruitment/retention
- Key challenge: addressing compensation for community-based providers

State example: Alabama

Incremental but state-wide approach to parity



Linking pay to push for high quality pre-K

City example: San Antonio

Compensation: beyond parity



Model program: not for all pre-K teachers

Funding: city sales tax

City example: New York City

Universal pre-K program



**Not parity, but working
to close the gap**

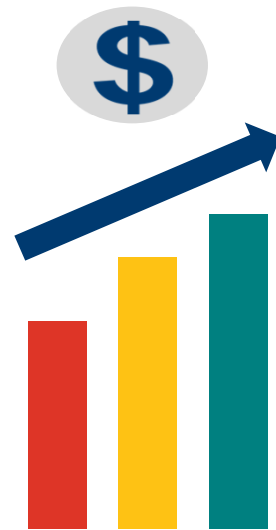
**Movement for better
compensation for pre-K
teachers launching broader
discussion about compensation
for all early educators**

Lessons & Takeaways




Making the case - we need data!

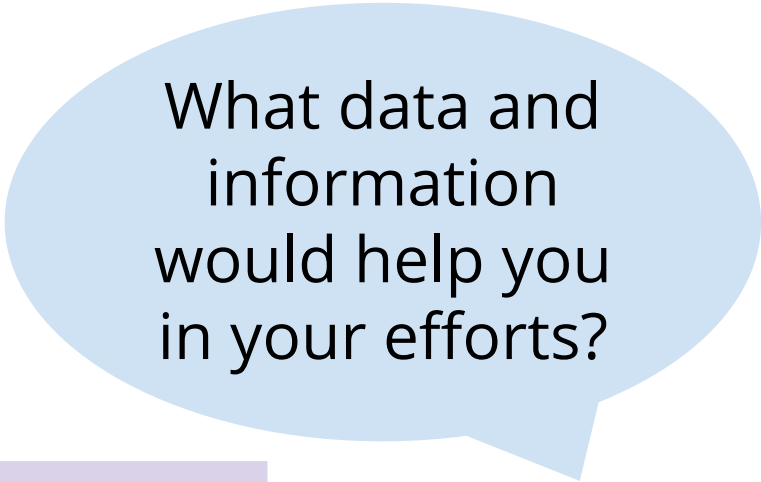
Compensation parity for pre-K teachers is one first step, but it's not enough




Considerations for Moving Forward



How do you see yourself applying the parity framework in your own community?



What data and information would help you in your efforts?



Barriers to moving toward more adequate compensation?



Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

Conducting research and proposing policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation *prepares, supports, and rewards the early care and education workforce* since 1999.

CONTACT US!



cscce.berkeley.edu



cscceinfo@berkeley.edu
caitlin.mclean@berkeley.edu



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