

Education, Compensation and Stability of the Early Childhood Workforce: What the research suggests for policies to improve program quality and child outcomes

- **Welcome**
- **Webinar begins at 2:00 p.m. ET. Be sure to use your phone for audio; turn off the sound on your computer to reduce background noise. All participants will be on mute. Please use the Question Box for questions.**
- **Thank you for joining us today!**

Education, Compensation and Stability of the Early Childhood Workforce: What the research suggests for policies to improve program quality and child outcomes



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Setting the Scene

- Higher expectations
- Fragmented system
- No agreed upon qualifications or levels of education
- Early childhood teaching as low skilled work



Education

- Education refers to:
 - the level of schooling or college an educator has completed.
 - formal training a teacher has received to teach young children
 - the professional development teachers have undertaken.
 - Qualifications and credentials achieved by early childhood educators.



The Research Base

- Surveys of teacher qualifications including highest level of education attained and coursework in child development or early childhood education.
- Fewer observational or descriptive studies that look at higher education coursework in depth or its impacts.
- Few observational or descriptive studies that look at professional development and its impacts.
- Child outcomes typically measured through some test of language (e.g. PPVT) and academic skills (e.g. Woodcock- Johnson Tests of Achievement)

Education and Program Quality

- Reviews of the research base (Barnett, 2004; Whitebook, 2003) suggest that teacher education is associated with program quality.
- Teachers with a 4 year degree and specialized training in ece are more effective (Barnett, 2004).
- Recent reviews (Epstein, et al., 2016) of evidence suggest cautiously that higher education levels are associated with stronger program quality for infants and toddlers.
- A secondary analysis of 7 major early childhood studies (Early et al., 2007) indicates contradictory findings. Only 8 of 27 analyses provided evidence of an association.

Education and Child Outcomes

- More formal education is associated with positive child outcomes (e.g. NICHD, 1999)
- Infants and toddlers in classrooms where caregiver had a BA degree had more advanced language skills (e.g. Burchinal et al., 2002).
- State preK evaluations show positive association between teacher qualifications and child outcomes in short and long term.
- Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2014) report advocates that lead teachers be on an “equal footing” in terms of education and qualifications as K-12 counterparts.

Compensation

- Refers to the:
 - Salaries earned by early childhood educators
 - The benefits (retirement, sick leave etc.) provided by the site in which early childhood educators work.



Research Base

- National data sets
- Workforce registries
- Reported income



Compensation and Program Quality

- Most important predictor of quality of care children receive among work environment variables is wages.
- Compensation is mediated by auspice. For profit centers pay their teaching staff less than non profit programs. PreK teachers paid more than child care workers. PreK teachers paid less than kindergarten teachers.
- The lower the quality of care the lower the wages and less benefits child care workers receive.
- Child care workers have experienced no real increase in earnings since 1997.
- Educators with higher qualifications less likely to report economic insecurity.

(Whitebook, Phillips & Howes, 2014)

Compensation and Child Outcomes

- Few studies that examine direct links between compensation and child outcomes.
- Association between teacher compensation and quality of care young children receive.
- Poor compensation poses a risk to well being of educators which, in turn, has consequences for children in their care.

(Whitebook & McLean, 2017)

Stability of Workforce

Three types of turnover:

- Job turnover
- Position turnover
- Occupational turnover

(Whitebook & Sakai, 2003)



Research Base

- Retrospective reports
- Often embedded in studies of child care quality
- Handful of studies that look at turnover deeply
- Most studies focus on lead teachers in child care centers.
- Few studies look at turnover in relation to child outcomes

Turnover & Program Quality

- Job turnover rates have remained steady at around 13%
- Higher turnover rates linked to program quality.
- The lower the quality of a center the higher the rates of teacher turnover.
- For profit centers experience the highest teacher turnover.

(Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 2014)



Turnover and Program Quality

- Impacts the operation of a program and impedes efforts to improve quality.

(Whitebook & Sakai, 2003)

“You’ll lose somebody and then there may be a whole shifting of people”

Child Care Director

- Impacts quality of teaching. Teaching staff who replace departing teachers do not have relationships with children required to support their development.

“You cannot teach and you cannot help as many children”

Child Care Teacher

Turnover & Child Outcomes

- Early studies (e.g. Howes & Hamilton, 1993)
Turnover affects young children's attachments with their caregivers which in turn impacts their language and cognitive development.
- Continuity of Care (CoC) study over 4 years in 11 Educare schools (Horn et al., 2018).
 - Children with CoC were rated by infant toddler teachers as showing less behavioral concerns and higher levels of self control, initiative, & attachment.

Turnover and Child Outcomes

- Teacher turnover has an impact on children's behavior

“It's confusing at first...They don't understand”

Child Care Teacher

“They'll test whoever is in there... because that stable person isn't there anymore so they are going to start acting out and testing boundaries.”

Child Care Teacher

“He's been acting out.....having like tantrums and stuff... for the past two weeks”

Parent

Improving and Supporting the ECE Workforce

- Teachers with more education are more likely to leave their jobs because of inadequate wages and benefits.

(Whitebook & Sakai, 2003)

- The work environment influences who teaches, how much they get paid, and whether they choose to stay or leave the profession.

(Totenhagen, et al, 2016)

Institute of Medicine National Research Council Report:

For too long the nation has been making do with systems and policies for the care and education workforce that are rather than envisioning the systems and policies that are needed, and committing to the strategies necessary to achieve them.

Improving and Supporting the ECE Workforce

- Building compensation, turnover and education into Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.
- Policy levers that lead to improvements in the quality of the work environment.
- Major restructuring of how early care and education financed.
- Advocacy
- Research to inform policy



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