



# Arkansas Workforce Study: Instructional Staff in Child Care & Early Childhood Education, 2017

Lorraine McKelvey, Ph.D.  
Andrew Forsman  
Jamie Morrison-Ward

Prepared for



The Good to Great initiative was a collaboration of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas State University Childhood Services, and the Clinton School of Public Service Center for Community Philanthropy, with support from Arkansas Community Foundation and co-funding from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Workforce Study of Instructional Staff: Survey .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b><i>Sampling Method.....</i></b>	<b>9</b>
<b><i>Measures .....</i></b>	<b>10</b>
Current Staff: Demographics and Experience .....	10
Current Staff: Economics and Wellness .....	10
Current Staff: Training and Professional Development.....	11
Current Staff: Rating of Organizational Environments .....	11
Past Staff: Demographics, Experience, and Compensation .....	12
Past Staff: Rating of Organizational Environments .....	12
<b><i>Results: Demographics and Experience of Current Staff.....</i></b>	<b>12</b>
What is the demographic makeup of those working in the field?.....	12
What types of settings are teachers typically working in? .....	12
How educated and experienced is the workforce? .....	13
<b><i>Results: Economics and Wellness of Current Staff .....</i></b>	<b>13</b>
What is the average workweek for those in the field? .....	13
What is the average pay for each level of experience teachers have?.....	14
What is the average pay for each level of education teachers have? .....	14
What types of job benefits are typically offered to teachers? .....	16
How concerned are teachers about their job security and/or work hours?.....	16
How common is it for the workforce to have a second job?.....	16
How common are economic insecurity and food insecurity among the workforce? .....	18
How common are signs of depression in the workforce? .....	18
<b><i>Results: Training and Professional Development of Current Staff.....</i></b>	<b>18</b>
How common is it for teachers to have an individualized professional growth plan?.....	19
What training and supports are teachers provided to properly implement their program's curriculum? .....	19
What training types are teachers most often using for their professional development?.....	19
In which content areas are teachers most often receiving training?.....	19
How prepared do teachers feel to work with different age groups of children? .....	20
How prepared do teachers feel to work with children who need additional support and attention?.....	21
<b><i>Results: Ratings of Organizational Environments by Current Staff.....</i></b>	<b>21</b>
How do teachers feel about their work environment, organizational culture, and their administrators' leadership? .....	21
Do teachers feel they have the knowledge, skills, resources, and support necessary to do their jobs well? .....	22
<b><i>Results: Rate of Suspensions and Expulsions of Children from Programs by Current Staff. 22</i></b>	<b>22</b>
How often are suspensions and expulsions occurring in Arkansas ECCE settings? .....	22
<b><i>Results: Important Factors in Planning to Leave from Current Staff.....</i></b>	<b>24</b>
When are current teachers planning to leave the field? .....	24
What factors are important in deciding to exit the ECCE workforce?.....	24

What kinds of teachers are more likely to consider leaving the field? .....	24
<b>Recap: Survey Results from Current ECCE Teachers</b> .....	25
<b>Results: Demographics, Experience, and Compensation of Past Staff</b> .....	26
What is the demographic makeup of those that have left the field? .....	26
In what types of settings did former teachers typically work?.....	26
How educated and experienced were former teachers? .....	26
What was the average compensation and benefits for former teachers?.....	27
What factors were important in why teachers decided to leave the field? .....	27
<b>Ratings of Organizational Environments by Past Staff</b> .....	29
How do former teachers rate their work environment, organizational culture, and their administrators' leadership at work? .....	29
<b>Recap: Survey Results from Former Teachers</b> .....	30
<b>Results: Further examining financial differences between current and past staff</b> .....	30
Are there demographic, educational, or experience-related differences between teachers in these three groups?.....	30
Are there differences in wages between teachers in these three groups?.....	30
<b>Workforce Study of Instructional Staff: Focus Groups</b> .....	31
<b>Sampling Method</b> .....	31
<b>Question Guide</b> .....	32
<b>Common Themes</b> .....	32
Personal experiences are a common substitute for pre-service education .....	32
High classroom ratios and behavior issues are the greatest challenges facing teachers .....	32
Teachers want more coaching and mentorship, particularly in working with children with special needs and behavior problems .....	33
Professional growth is hampered by a lack of financial support for and purposeful planning of continuing education .....	34
<b>Ranking Participants' Concerns and How to Best Support Them</b> .....	35
<b>One Minute with Your Senator</b> .....	35
<b>Leaving the Field</b> .....	38
<b>Recap: Focus Group Results from Current Teachers</b> .....	38
<b>General Discussion</b> .....	39
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	40
<b>Appendices</b> .....	42
<b>Appendix 1: Tables</b> .....	42
<b>Appendix 2: Staff Workforce Study</b> .....	69
<b>Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions</b> .....	90
<b>Appendix 4: Preparation and Execution of Participatory Ranking Methodology Activities</b> .....	92

# Executive Summary

## Purpose

Workforce studies provide an understanding of the people that make up a particular field—their wages and benefits, education levels, professional development needs, and common barriers and supports to their work. Having effective policy and workplace supports is critical in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) because research has shown the first five years of life are the most important for a child’s developing brain.

## Sample and Methodology

Researchers from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences developed an online survey that was sent to thousands of ECCE educators (those working in licensed child care programs teaching and caring for children birth to Pre-K). Over 1,400 people replied with their input! Participants included 1,270 current (56% in higher- and 44% in lower-quality settings) and 151 former educators. The UAMS team also held focus groups in two cities to gain personal insights into the working lives of ECCE teachers and the difficulties they face from both inside and outside their programs.

## Results

### Education

The educational background of Arkansas’s early childhood teachers lags behind what is needed to create a quality early care system in our state: Only 61% of the field reported having an ECCE-related education (Bachelor’s degree or higher in related field OR any education level with CDA and/or Arkansas Birth-PreK credential). When looking only at related Bachelor’s degrees or higher, that number fell to 31%.

Some teachers in our focus groups said this low barrier to entry allowed them to switch fields into early education with no prior coursework or experience, other than their personal experiences as mothers and family members. While some might see this as a positive way to boost flexible employment options in our state, the lack of professionalized training that many teachers report having lowers the quality of care that Arkansas children receive.

### Wages

Our survey indicates that 85% of teachers work full-time (31+hours per week) and make \$19,365 - \$40,206 based on their level of education and years of experience. Those with an ECCE-related education were paid an average of \$6,718 more than their peers. There is also pay disparity based on the ages of children in the classroom—Infant/toddler teachers report lower wages than preschool teachers, and significantly less than kindergarten teachers.

Even early educators with Master’s degrees make \$5,000 less on average than Arkansas’s kindergarten teachers (\$40,206 versus \$45,850). One focus group participant summed up

the sector's low wages powerfully when saying, "I made more money flipping burgers at Sonic than I do working with human beings."

## Benefits

Unlike many other industries, the ECE workforce has little access to common workplace benefits. Only half of teachers said they are offered health or dental insurance through their jobs and only 40% were offered retirement plans. Roughly 35% said their job did not offer paid holidays or sick/personal days, and only 8% had access to paid maternity leave. Unlike other sectors, cost-reduction benefits like free meals and free or reduced cost tuition for teachers' children were relatively common at 48%.

## Economic Insecurity

Nearly three in five (58%) early educators reported having trouble paying for their basic economic needs in the last year, which broke down into four categories: medical expenses (41%), important monthly bills like rent or car payments, utility bills (19%), and transportation (24%). Results showed that teachers who work primarily with infants or toddlers are more at risk for economic insecurity than those working with other ages groups.

## Food Insecurity

Four out of ten (40%) ECCE teachers in our survey reported being food insecure. Teachers were counted as food insecure if in the last year they, "ran out of food and didn't have money to buy more" or "cut meal sizes or skipped meals altogether because there wasn't enough money for food". Those caring for infants and toddlers were significantly more at risk for food insecurity (50%) than those caring for children in other age groups.

## Professional Development

Single topic, one-session trainings are the most common type of professional development teachers receive, with 61% saying they attended at least one training of this type in the last year. In-depth, multi-session trainings (52%) and professional conferences (34%) were also popular options. Research suggests trainings with a strong mentoring/coaching component are the most effective over time, but only 19% reported participating in this kind of training over the last year.

A desire for more coaching-based trainings was heavily discussed in our focus groups. Many strongly believed they were too often receiving the wrong kinds of training. One participant said, "Stop bringing us to these huge trainings and lecturing us. Come to our classroom and show us what you're trying to teach." Teachers reported rarely being paid for attending trainings outside of normal business hours and were not reimbursed for travel to the training site, which lead them to choose trainings based on convenience, not on content.

Focus group participants also talked at length about the lack of on-the-job training for new teachers that, combined with high child-teacher ratios, puts incredible pressure on



new hires. One teacher's story stood out in particular, "When I went into my first job... we had 20 kids and 7 of those had behavior issues. That's what makes people quit".

### Predicting Future Turnover

Nearly 10% of teachers said they planned to leave the ECCE field entirely in the next two years, and nearly 25% within the next five years. Another 30% were unsure how much longer they would stay. When asked what factors were motivating their decision, 72% said one or more financial reasons was a key influence (wanting better pay, wanting better benefits, or no opportunity for career advancement).

## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Our survey and focus group participants describe a workforce that is poorly compensated, often lacks basic professional benefits and quality professional development, and struggles to support children with challenging behaviors or developmental delays. We now also understand that many early educators in our state are at risk for depression, go to work hungry, and have difficulties meeting their own basic economic needs.

These factors not only add up to poor quality of life for our estimated 16,000 ECCE staff statewide, but very likely translates into lower quality care for Arkansas's children, and less optimal educational outcomes as they grow. To help make progress for a better future, we recommend state policymakers, education leaders, and philanthropists focus on four key areas:

### **1. Explore options for increasing teachers' pay and benefits.**

States have implemented multiple techniques for increasing stability in the ECE workforce, including supplementing salaries through stipends. For example, the WAGE\$® program provides education-based salary supplements to ECE educators based on their education and years in the field. States have also implemented targeted tax credits for ECE staff to incentivize education and retention. Both Louisiana and Nebraska have refundable tax credits for ECE staff and directors that are tied to the quality rating of the program in which they work, their education level, and years in the field.

While early educators in higher-quality settings tend to make more than others in the field, their annual pay is still far below that of kindergarten teachers. Some states have worked to prevent turnover in early education programs by introducing pay parity laws that equalize wages and benefits between the two groups. Pay parity could also flatten the vast differences in wages within the early education sector that are tied to the specific ways each program is funded (the mix of various public funding models and private tuition they use). In extreme cases, these program differences can translate to a nearly \$10,000 gap in pay based solely on where teachers work.

### **2. Support more mentoring & coaching-based training models, especially when behavioral challenges or special needs are involved.**

Research suggests training for early educators is more effective when: 1) it happens over a series of sessions that build off of each other, rather than a single-session, "one-shot" model, 2) it includes a fixed curriculum that provides room to individualize examples, context, and delivery

strategies, 3) participants have opportunities to apply what they are learning during and immediately after the training, 4) trainers are able to observe teachers trying out what they've learned and give feedback on their progress, and 5) participants have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and to share their accomplishments and challenges with others.

### **3. Find ways to support & incentivize additional college-level education for current staff.**

Knowing that cost of tuition is a great obstacle to teachers pursuing additional education, some states have developed tuition or wage subsidy programs for their early educators. For example, the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®) program provides wage subsidies that link a teacher's education, compensation, and years of experience together, and awards pay raises as teachers complete additional blocks of college credit hours.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood also removes some of the typical barriers to college education by paying most of participating teachers' tuition, books, and travel expenses (including paid release time from work), and by providing scholarship counselors to help them navigate the process. Arkansas has traditionally supported scholarship opportunities for early educators to attain their CDA credential, but that funding was recently shifted into improving the state's ECCE quality rating and improvement system.

### **4. Explore additional options to support staff who are caring for infants and toddlers.**

We've all heard the saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Not only is this true for the lasting positive effects that quality early education can have on a child's life in general, but it's especially true for our youngest Arkansans. Our survey results showed ECCE teachers that care for infants and toddlers often faced the greatest challenges of those working in the sector. Therefore, we recommend that efforts to improve wages, education, and training opportunities for early educators pay special attention to the needs of infant/toddler teachers.



## Introduction

The Good to Great initiative was a collaboration of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas State University Childhood Services, and the Clinton School of Public Service Center for Community Philanthropy (with support from Arkansas Community Foundation and co-funding from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation) designed to increase staff capacity and family engagement in early childhood centers. During their 26-month pilot, G2G worked intensely with eight centers in two rural Arkansas communities to provide mentor/coaching-based hands-on training, curriculum support, and other capacity-building tools with the goal of improving school readiness levels in children living in these communities. Unfortunately, centers in the target communities experienced levels of turnover that made establishing roots and sustaining progress nearly impossible (96% turnover rate). This was coupled by two centers closing their doors permanently and one other changing management over the pilot's timeline.

Having observed this extraordinary level of turnover firsthand, leaders at G2G commissioned an early education workforce study to better understand what factors lead to high turnover rates in Arkansas, create a measure of expected future turnover statewide, and to explore other issues potentially affecting the early education workforce. Many states across the country regularly use such workforce studies to better understand the working lives of their early childhood educators, but this study represents the first statewide effort to do so in Arkansas in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of our study is to establish a baseline understanding of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) workforce that will be used to provide Arkansas's ECCE teachers the resources, support, and training they need to effectively do their jobs. In particular, we hope to better understand the reasons for the high turnover rates seen across Arkansas<sup>2</sup> and how state and local policymakers could work together with teachers and administrators to address this issue.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Index-2016-Arkansas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> McKelvey, L. M., & Chapin-Critz, M. (2016). *Survey of Child Care Directors*. University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; Little Rock, AR.

# Workforce Study of Instructional Staff: Survey

## Sampling Method

The Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways system (TAPP, now Professional Development Registry), was the common system Arkansas used to host training offerings and track professional development credit hours for ECCE workers, until July 2017. For our study, email addresses of all registered TAPP users were obtained and filtered, according to the three criteria listed below, to create a sample.

1. Completed a TAPP-registered training or been otherwise active in the system from 1/1/2017 to 6/30/2017;
2. Email address on file;
3. Were not registered trainers within TAPP (the TAPP system did not collect data on job roles, so this was calculated based on separate records maintained by Arkansas State University).

These filters produced a target sample of 14,496 teachers, which was then reduced by 2,459 because their email addresses returned failed delivery notices. This resulted in a total emailed sample of 12,037. A total of 1,421 participants opened and at least partially completed the survey (270 partial respondents), with 1,270 participants reporting they were employed in the field and 151 reporting previous employment in the field. This resulted in a response rate of 12%,<sup>3</sup> which is similar to response rates of ECCE workforce studies in other states.<sup>4</sup>

The exact number of individuals working in the ECCE workforce is unknown. We estimated the number of staff in the field using administrative data from the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE). Each program that serves children in the state is licensed to serve a given number of infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children. Based upon data received in October 2017, there are 2,240 programs in Arkansas (894 rural and 1,346 urban) that are licensed to serve a total number of 153,265 children (48,167 rural and 105,098 urban). We estimated that there is approximately 15,793 (5,048 rural and 10,745 urban) ECCE staff working in Arkansas.<sup>5</sup> We also estimated the number of ECCE staff in higher-quality settings<sup>6</sup> as 6,265 (2,265 rural and 4,000 urban), which would represent approximately 40% of the ECCE workforce. Table 1 in Appendix 1 provides an estimate of the representativeness of the resulting sample.

For transparency reasons, it is important to note that the following groups of teachers were more likely to answer our survey than was statistically expected, and this may have affect our results in

---

<sup>3</sup> TAPP members who reported living in the cities of Prescott and Marvell were surveyed using a separate survey link in order to analyze their responses (N=26). We received only 4 responses for the sample, so data were combined for analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Vermont's Early Childhood and Afterschool Workforce (December 2015); Michigan's Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce Study (September 2009)

<sup>5</sup> Using the maximum ratios in minimum licensing, one can get an estimate of the number of staff needed to maintain state staff-child ratio requirements. This mechanism for estimating staff is likely an overestimate as ECE programs often choose not to serve the maximum number of children they are licensed to serve and licenses can include multiple funding streams with different ratio requirements.

<sup>6</sup> The license serves ABC, Head Start/Early Head Start, and/or the program has a Better Beginnings rating of 2 or 3

some way: 1) Those who work in rural settings, 2) Those who work in higher-quality programs (more than expected in both rural and urban settings), and 3) Former staff who worked in a lower-quality program located in a rural setting.

## Measures

This study used a variety of measures and subscales borrowed from the national ECCE workforce study,<sup>7</sup> as well as previous studies from the ECCE literature. Teachers were asked at the beginning of the survey if they were current or former members of the ECCE workforce and were then directed to the appropriate questions based on their response. The sections below give a brief outline of the types of questions that appeared in the survey (a full copy can be found in Appendix 2).

### Current Staff: Demographics and Experience

Staff who indicated that they were currently employed in the ECCE field were asked basic demographic questions (age, education, experience in the field, etc.), the age group they primarily work with, the funding mix<sup>8</sup> of their classroom, and the Better Beginnings level of their employer. Additionally, staff was asked how much longer they thought they would remain in the field. For those that indicated two years or less, they were asked what reasons motivate their potential exit (e.g., impending retirement, seeking higher pay, health-related reasons, etc).

### Current Staff: Economics and Wellness

Respondents were asked about their average weekly work hours, their current pay rate, and the benefits offered by their employer (e.g., paid vacation, paid sick/personal days, health insurance, etc). We used items from the Family Map Inventories to measure economic and food insecurity.<sup>9</sup> The selected items from the tool inquire about the family's ability to provide basic needs, including housing, utilities, transportation, and medical expenses. We also included a measure of food insecurity, assessed with two questions from the Household Food Security Survey. Teachers indicated agreement with (a) "The food that you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more" and (b) "You or others in your household cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food." Questions were rated on a 1 (never true) to 3 (often true) scale.

---

<sup>7</sup> National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team. (2013). National Survey of Early Care and Education: Summary Data Collection and Sampling Methodology. OPRE Report #2013-46, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>8</sup> "Funding mix" refers to the various types of revenue streams that go toward funding each child's care. For example, within the same classroom, one child's tuition may be covered fully by state-issued vouchers, another's parents may be charged at full private-pay rates, and while a third could be covered by a mix of funding sources and programs.

<sup>9</sup> Whiteside-Mansell, L., Bradley, R., Conners, N., & Bokony, P. (2007). The Family Map: Structured Family Interview to Identify Risks and Strengths in Head Start Families. *NHSA DIALOG*. <http://doi.org/10.1080/15240750701742239>. Whiteside-Mansell, L., Johnson, D., Bokony, P., Mckelvey, L. M., Conners-Burrow, N., Swindle, T., & Conners-, N. (2013). Supporting Family Engagement with Parents of Infants and Toddlers. *NHSA Dialog*, 16(1), 20–44. <https://journals.uncc.edu/dialog/article/view/42>.

We screened the workforce for depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2).<sup>10</sup> The two-item PHQ-2 is efficient, well validated, and recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force as a good screening option for depressive symptoms. Response options on the PHQ-2 include “not at all” (0), “several days” (1), “more than half the days” (2), and “nearly every day” (3). Sum scores on the PHQ-2 range from zero to six, with higher scores representing a greater endorsement of depressive symptoms. Using a cutoff score of three has a sensitivity of 83% and a specificity of 92% for predicting major depressive disorders, while a cutoff of two increases the sensitivity to 93%. Studies document the impact of lower-level depression on caregiving in low-income samples.<sup>11</sup> As a result, we examined teachers scoring at two or higher.

### Current Staff: Training and Professional Development

Respondents were asked to which professional associations they belong and for what types of content areas they received training within the last six months (e.g., children’s development and learning, cultural and linguistic diversity, etc). Additionally, one scale measured teachers’ perceptions of their own preparedness to work with different age groups and with children that typically need extra support (e.g., those with disabilities, language barriers, or social-emotional delays). Finally, respondents were asked if there had been any suspensions or expulsions of children in their workplace in the last year.

### Current Staff: Rating of Organizational Environments

To gauge organizational climate, we used 18 items from the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES)<sup>12</sup> and four items from the companion role perceptions scale.<sup>13</sup> These questions were used to get a better understanding of how staff views their workplace culture, the level of staff cohesion, and the level of support teachers feel from administrators and peers in their center (e.g., “Teachers help make decisions about things that directly affect them”). To look more closely at the specific aspects of a high-quality workplace environment, organizational environment scale breaks down into 10 subscales: 1) collegiality, 2) professional growth, 3) supervisor support, 4) clarity, 5) reward system, 6) decision making, 7) goal consensus, 8) task orientation, 9) physical setting, and 10) innovativeness.

---

<sup>10</sup> Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., & Williams, J. B. W. (2003). The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a two-item depression screener. *Medical Care*, 41(11), 1284–1292.

<sup>11</sup> Conners-Burrow, N. A., Bokony, P., Whiteside-Mansell, L., Jarrett, D., Kraleti, S., McKelvey, L. M., & Kyzer, A. (2014). Low-level depressive symptoms reduce maternal support for child cognitive development. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 28(5), 404–412.

<sup>12</sup> Bloom, P. J. (2010). *Measuring work attitudes in the early childhood setting. Technical manual for the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey and the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey*. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons.

<sup>13</sup> Bloom, P. J. (1988). *A Great Place to Work: Improving Conditions for Staff in Young Children's Programs*. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009-5786 (NAEYC Publication No. 250).

## Past Staff: Demographics, Experience, and Compensation

Staff who indicated that they no longer worked in the field were asked basic demographic questions (age, education, experience in the field, etc.), their pay rate at the time of exit, the benefits offered at their last ECCE job, and why they chose to leave the field.

Additionally, past staff were asked about the age group they primarily worked with, the funding mix of their classroom, and the Better Beginnings level of their last employer.

## Past Staff: Rating of Organizational Environments

Mirroring the current staff survey, the past staff survey included the organizational environment and role perceptions scales described above.

## Results: Demographics and Experience of Current Staff

The following section details the demographics of current teachers, their education and experience levels, as well as the quality of the programs for which they work. Results tables can be found in Appendix 1.

### What is the demographic makeup of those working in the field?

Our sample of 1,270 teachers employed in the field was similar in both median age and racial makeup to the general population of Arkansas, with a median age of 40 years<sup>14</sup> and 29.2% of teachers identifying as something other than Caucasian (statewide = 37.9 years; 27% non-Caucasian).<sup>15</sup>

Job roles were split 61.5% to 38.5%, respectively, between lead teachers (in center-based programs) and assistant teachers (in either center-based programs or family child care home settings). There was a significant relationship between race/ethnicity and job role ( $\chi^2=10.19$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=.001$ ), where minority respondents were more likely to be in assistant teacher positions and White respondents were more likely to be in lead teacher positions. Nearly all the teachers currently working in the field identified as female (98.4%) and spoke English as their primary language (97.1%). See Table 2 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### What types of settings are teachers typically working in?

Teachers in our sample were roughly evenly split between working in urban or rural counties (57.5% urban versus 42.5% rural). The majority of teachers report working primarily with preschool-aged children (59.8%), which is roughly equivalent to the percentage of slots available for preschool-aged children in the DCCECE licensing database (55.9%).

---

<sup>14</sup> Workforce studies from other states (MI, VT, OR) also suggest this is near average for the field as a whole

<sup>15</sup> 2015 data from [datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas)

Programs were rated as “higher-quality” if teachers said their program held a Better Beginnings level 3 rating or was funded by ABC, Head Start, or Early Head Start. This quality standard was chosen because level 3 is the highest Better Beginnings rating and programs receiving funds from ABC, Head Start, and Early Head Start are subject to enhanced quality standards as a condition of their funding. Quality rating for programs in which teachers are currently employed was roughly equivalent, with 56.1% working in higher-quality programs and 43.9% in lower-quality programs. See Table 3 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### How educated and experienced is the workforce?

Nearly two-thirds of the field had less than a college degree in any field (62.7%) and about a third had an ECCE-related bachelor’s degree or higher (30.7%). CDA and Arkansas’s Birth-PreK credentials were also held by ECCE workforce members. When both education in an ECCE-related field and credentials were taken into account, 61.1% of respondent teachers had an ECCE-related education (related education is considered an ECCE-related bachelor’s degree or higher, regardless of credentials, OR any level of education with one or both credentials). As would be expected, there was a significant association between education of the workforce and quality ( $\chi^2=62.84$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ ), where those with an ECCE-related education reported working in higher-quality programs.

Most teachers reported 5-15 years of experience in the classroom (43.2%), with others split nearly evenly between having less than five years of experience (29.8%), or more than 15 years (27.0%), respectively. There was a significant association between length of time in the workforce and quality ( $\chi^2=28.29$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ ), where those with less than five years’ experience were more likely to report working in lower-quality programs. See Table 4 for full results of education levels and Table 5 for a more detailed breakdown of experience, both can be found in Appendix 1.

## Results: Economics and Wellness of Current Staff

The following section reports the average workweek, pay rates by education and experience, and access to benefits that current staff have. Perceptions of job security, having a second job, and risk for economic/food insecurity and depression are also discussed.

### What is the average workweek for those in the field?

The vast majority of teachers work full time (84.6% work 31-60+ hours), with the average teacher working 31-40 hours per week (56.6%). See Table 6 in Appendix 1 for a more detailed breakdown.



When considering both college degrees and credentials, only 39% of current teachers had an ECCE-related education.



## What is the average pay for each level of experience teachers have?

As expected, average annual pay increased with experience, from \$19,365 for those with less than a year of experience to \$32,406 for those with more than 20 years of experience. These wages are similar to those reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: the average annual wage for child care workers is \$19,700 and for preschool teachers is \$31,700.<sup>16</sup>

Arkansas is similar to the rest of the nation, where compensation rates for ECCE professionals remain well below the average annual income for an individual, which is \$51,694 for men and \$37,733 for women.<sup>17,18</sup> There was a significant interaction between quality of the program and role of the ECE worker for predicting compensation ( $F=4.52$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=.03$ ). Lead teachers in higher-quality programs reported making significantly more per hour than those in lower-quality programs, but compensation for teacher assistants is comparable across program quality (see Figure 1 in Appendix 1). Results are displayed in Table 7 in Appendix 1.

## What is the average pay for each level of education teachers have?

As expected, average pay increased with education, from \$20,030 per year for those with some high school and no ECCE credentials to \$40,206 per year for those with a master's degree or higher in an ECCE-related field, regardless of credentials. Those with an ECCE-related education (bachelor's degree or higher in an ECCE-related field OR any education level with credentials) made an average of \$6,718 more per year than those without a related education. Only those with a master's in an ECCE-related field exceeded the average individual annual income in Arkansas for women (\$40,206 for Master's-level ECCE worker versus \$37,733 for average Arkansan woman) and none met the average individual income for men (\$51,694).

Early childhood teachers in Arkansas also face a pay gap compared to those in similar career fields. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics,<sup>19</sup> preschool teachers in Arkansas earn an average of \$31,700 per year as a group (field average, not broken down by education level), which is comparable to our sample of ECCE teachers who have a Bachelor's degree. Even more striking, early childhood educators with Master's degrees make over \$5,000 less on average than Arkansas's kindergarten teachers, who earn an average \$45,850 per year. For more information on ECCE pay rates by education, see Table 8 below, or in Appendix 1.

---

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_ar.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ar.htm) (child care worker 39-9011, preschool teachers 25-2011)

<sup>17</sup> 2015 data from [datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_ar.htm#25-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ar.htm#25-0000)

**Table 8.**  
**Average pay rate by education level for ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

<b>Education level</b> (n = 1,141)		<i>As expected, pay typically increased with education and credentials. Only those with a master's degree in an ECCE-related field exceeded the average individual annual income in Arkansas for women (\$37,733), and none met the average individual annual income for men (\$51,694). Arkansas's average pay for preschool teachers was \$31,700 and for kindergarten teachers is \$45,850.</i>	
Less than bachelor's degree <i>without</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials			
		Per Hour	Per Year
Some high school		\$9.63	\$20,030
High school/GED		\$10.06	\$20,925
Some college		\$10.34	\$21,507
Associate's degree		\$11.69	\$24,315
Less than bachelor's degree <i>with</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials			
High school/GED + credentials		\$10.56	\$21,965
Some college + credentials		\$11.59	\$24,107
Associate's degree + credentials		\$12.24	\$25,459
Any degree in <i>unrelated</i> field			
Without credentials		\$11.87	\$24,690
+ credentials		\$11.26	\$23,421
Bachelor's degree or higher in <i>related</i> field regardless of credentials			
Bachelor's degree		\$15.50	\$32,240
Master's degree or higher		\$19.33	\$40,206

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Those with an ECCE-related education (bachelor's degree or higher in a related field, OR any education level + credentials) were paid an average of \$6,718 more than those without a related education.

## What types of job benefits are typically offered to teachers?

Unlike many other industries, the ECCE workforce had little access to common workplace benefits. About half of teachers had access to health or dental insurance (53.0% health insurance, 48.5% dental insurance). Only about 3 out of 10 of the workforce reported receiving regular wage increases, but approximately half reported other benefits that financially help families (e.g., cost reductions like free on-site meals while children are being served meals or free/reduced child care fees if their own child(ren) is enrolled in their center). Retirement benefits were provided to a little more than 40% of the sample. While the majority of teachers (81.6%) reported some kind of paid leave, access to paid maternity leave is rare (8.3%).

When it comes to financial supports to improve the quality of the care provided in the program, a little more than half of the workers (56.6%) were paid for their state-required training hours if that training took place outside of normal business hours. Strikingly, only a little more than 1.5 in 10 (16.3%) of the teachers in our sample reported being paid for training beyond what is required to meet minimum licensing requirements.

There were significant differences in what benefits were offered to teachers based on the quality rating of their program, with more benefits generally provided for staff in higher-quality programs than in lower-quality programs. In fact, free or reduced tuition for the children of current staff was the only benefit that lower-quality programs were statistically more likely to offer than higher-quality programs. For a more detailed breakdown, see Table 9 on the next page, or in Appendix 1.



About half of ECCE teachers do not have access to health or dental insurance through their jobs.

## How concerned are teachers about their job security and/or work hours?

By and large, teachers reported feeling secure in their jobs, with only about one in five agreeing or strongly agreeing they were concerned about being laid off, having their work hours reduced (18.6%), or being sent home without pay if attendance in their program was low (21.0%). There were no significant differences in how teachers answered based on the quality rating of their program. However, there was a difference based on the ages of children in their classroom ( $\chi^2=9.5$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $P=.02$ ), with teachers who cared for infants and toddlers reporting greater fear of layoffs and reductions in hours than those caring for preschool- and school-aged children.

## How common is it for the workforce to have a second job?

It was rare for teachers to report having a second paying job. However, 12.4% of ECCE teachers worked an additional job all year, 2.4% during the summer only, and 2.0% during the school year only.

**Table 9.**  
**Job benefits offered to ECCE teachers working in Arkansas by quality of program**

	All Staff (N=1,041)	Staff in Higher- Quality Programs (N=654)	Staff in Lower- Quality Programs (N=365)
Insurance***	57.1%	66.8%	40.8%
Health insurance***	53.0%	59.9%	36.1%
Dental insurance***	48.5%	54.2%	33.3%
Disability and/or life insurance***	37.9%	43.7%	24.3%
Holidays and leave***	81.6%	90.4%	72.6%
Paid vacation days	45.1%	43.1%	46.2%
Paid holidays***	64.3%	67.3%	53.8%
Paid sick/personal days***	66.5%	72.8%	49.8%
Maternity leave	27.0%	28.7%	24.1%
Unpaid maternity leave	19.6%	19.3%	18.9%
Paid maternity leave**	8.3%	9.3%	4.7%
Paid training***	59.2%	64.5%	49.9%
Paid for training hours required by licensing***	56.6%	60.8%	45.3%
Pay or stipend for additional training beyond required hours**	16.3%	18.1%	11.1%
Cost reductions	48.1%	48.5%	47.4%
Free meals for staff***	30.6%	33.1%	24.5%
Free/reduced child care fees*	28.8%	25.5%	32.3%
Raises and retirement***	53.5%	63.5%	36.8%
Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education***	29.5%	33.5%	18.6%
Retirement or pension plan***	41.7%	49.2%	24.3%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. + $P < .10$ , \* $P < .05$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \*\*\* $P < .001$ , chi-square comparisons for program quality.

### How common are economic insecurity and food insecurity among the workforce?

Nearly three in five (57.8%) ECCE teachers reported risk in their ability to meet their basic needs, as defined in the Family Map Inventories.<sup>20</sup> Basic-needs risk was comprised of four difficulties during the last year when paying for: 1) medical expenses (41.2% endorsed), 2) important monthly bills like rent and car payments (41.1%), 3) utilities (19.4%), and transportation (24.0%). Results showed teachers who work primarily with infants or toddlers (0-35 months) are marginally more at risk for economic insecurity than those who work with other age groups. There were not differences based on program quality.

In terms of food insecurity, 40% of the ECCE workforce was food insecure. Food insecurity was measured by “running out of food and not having money to buy more” and “cutting the size of meals or skipping meals to make food stretch.” Results also showed ECCE teachers who work primarily with infants or toddlers (0-35 months) are significantly more at risk for food insecurity than those who work with other age groups (50% of infant-toddler teachers reported food insecurity). For a more information, see Table 10 in Appendix 1.

### How common are signs of depression in the workforce?

We asked respondents to complete a widely used depression screener (the Patient Health Questionnaire-2), and results showed that more than a third of ECCE teachers (35.0%) were at risk for depression. Further, ECCE teachers who worked primarily with infants and toddlers were significantly more likely to be at risk than those who worked with other groups ( $\chi^2=7.94$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $P=.05$ ). There were no differences in depression risk based on the quality of the programs.

By comparison, 6.7% of U.S. adults are estimated to have been diagnosed with major depression at some point in their lives<sup>21</sup>, a rate 5 times lower than the risk level of teachers in our sample. While screening “at risk” for depression does not guarantee a clinical diagnosis, it is an important sign of the high levels of stress many ECCE teachers in experience.



Nearly 60% of ECCE teachers have trouble meeting basic economic needs & 40% are food insecure.



One in three ECCE teachers are at risk for depression, a rate 5x higher than the national average.

## Results: Training and Professional Development of Current Staff

The following section reports on teachers’ access to individualized professional development plans and curriculum training as well as the content and types of trainings most commonly attended in the last year. Teachers’ perceptions of their ability to work with children of different age groups and different types of children requiring additional support are also discussed.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.thefamilymap.org/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression.shtml>

### How common is it for teachers to have an individualized professional growth plan?

Individualized professional development plans are common practice across a variety of industries. Supervisors and employees meet to discuss an employee's professional goals for the year and decide what resources and training may be necessary to meet those goals. However, only 43.3% of ECCE teachers reported having such a plan. Teachers who worked for higher-quality programs were significantly more likely to report having a growth plan than those in lower-quality programs ( $\chi^2=44.86$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ ).

### What training and supports are teachers provided to properly implement their program's curriculum?

More than one-third of the ECCE field (35.1%) reported not receiving any formal or informal training on implementing their program's curriculum. Approximately, 1 in 10 (14%) received training on their program's curriculum from the developer and nearly one in four (23.4%) received training from their director. Additionally, only about a quarter of teachers (23.5%) received ongoing coaching as part of their curriculum training. We created a dichotomy of informal or formal training on the program curriculum (training by a director or developer and/or ongoing coaching), and about half of teachers reported some support for the program curriculum (51.6%). Teachers in lower-quality programs were significantly less likely to receive curriculum training than those in higher-quality programs ( $\chi^2=7.64$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=.006$ ). See Table 11 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### What training types are teachers most often using for their professional development?

Single topic, one-session training was the most common type of professional development teachers received, with 60.5% of ECCE teachers stating they attended at least one single topic, one-session training during the last year. In-depth, multi-session trainings (51.5%) and professional conferences (33.6%) were also popular training types; however, mentoring/coaching-based training (19.2%) and observation time (10.9%) were rarer in the field. We created a summary score to represent higher-quality training types (multi-session, coaching, college coursework, shadowing, and communities of practice). About two-thirds (66.4%) of teachers reported some of the more effective training types during the last year. There were no differences in how often programs used higher-quality training types based program quality. See Table 12 in Appendix 1 for full details.

### In which content areas are teachers most often receiving training?

Children's development and learning was the most popular content area for training among Arkansas's workforce, with 79.4% of ECCE teachers attending a child development training in the last year. The majority of ECCE teachers had also received training in children's health, safety, nutrition (68.7%), and teacher-child interactions, including positive classroom climate and behavior management (64.7%). Cultural and linguistic diversity was the least attended content area at 23.3%. Teachers in higher-quality programs were significantly more likely to have received training in nearly all areas. For a complete breakdown of content areas attended, see Table 13 in Appendix 1.



**Table 13.**  
**Training content areas most often used for professional development among the ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

<b>Content areas covered in trainings ECCE teachers attended during the past year</b>		<i>Children's development and learning was the most popular content area for trainings among Arkansas's ECCE workforce.</i>		
		All Staff (N=1,041)	Staff in Quality Programs (N=654)	Staff in Lower Quality Programs (N=387)
Children's development and learning <sup>+</sup>		79.4%	81.3%	76.4%
Children's health, safety, and nutrition <sup>+</sup>		68.7%	70.6%	65.2%
Teacher-child interactions, including positive classroom climate and behavior management <sup>***</sup>		64.7%	67.7%	58.4%
Learning environments, curriculum implementation, and program quality <sup>***</sup>		54.9%	59.8%	46.0%
Collaborating, communicating with, and/or supporting families <sup>*</sup>		47.1%	49.4%	42.7%
Using observation and assessment to plan daily activities or child screening <sup>***</sup>		42.5%	47.9%	33.4%
Inclusion, participation, and learning for children with identified disabilities/delays		31.6%	32.7%	29.9%
Cultural and linguistic diversity		23.3%	22.8%	23.8%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Teachers in higher-quality programs were significantly more likely to have received training in children's development and learning and in learning environments, curriculum implementation, and program quality. <sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ , <sup>\*</sup> $P < .05$ , <sup>\*\*</sup> $P < .01$ , <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $P < .001$ .

### How prepared do teachers feel to work with different age groups of children?

Teachers most often reported (67.1%) feeling "generally prepared" or "totally prepared" to work with preschoolers (three-five years), followed by infants/toddlers (0-35 months) 52.9%, and school-aged children (6+ years) at 48.3%. To better understand this data, we broke down teachers' responses by the primary age of the children they reported currently having in their classrooms. As would be expected, teachers were significantly

more likely to feel “generally prepared” or “totally prepared” to work with the age group that was currently in their classroom, as compared to other age groups.

### How prepared do teachers feel to work with children who need additional support and attention?

Only about two-thirds of teachers (62.9%) reported feeling “generally prepared” or “totally prepared” to work with children who have social-emotional and/or behavioral problems, and only 56.1% of teachers felt “generally prepared” or “totally prepared” to work with children with developmental delays/disabilities or special health care needs. Teachers were least comfortable (39.3%) working with children who are learning English as a second language.

Teachers in lower-quality programs were significantly less likely to feel prepared to work with children who have social-emotional and/or behavioral problems than those in higher-quality programs ( $\chi^2=14.17$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ ). No significant differences existed for the other two groups of children based on program quality. Results can also be found in Table 14 in Appendix A.

## Results: Ratings of Organizational Environments by Current Staff

The following section reports on ECCE teachers’ perceptions of their organizational environment/workplace culture, their own skills and knowledge, and their access to the resources and support needed to do their jobs well.

### How do teachers feel about their work environment, organizational culture, and their administrators’ leadership?

To assess teachers’ ratings of their organizational environment, we used an 18-question scale called the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey, as described above. Two-item subscales (e.g., “Reward System”, “Collegiality”, “Physical Setting”, etc.) were constructed to create 10 subscores and 1 overall score. To complete the survey, teachers’ rated how much they agreed with statements like “Supervisor(s) are knowledgeable and competent,” and “Salaries and benefits are distributed equitably.” The response options for the scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); therefore, the higher the score, the more favorably the staff perceived their work environment.

Overall, teachers rated their work environments as passable but in need of improvement at 3.77 out of 5.0. The lowest rated categories (Reward System, 3.19, and Decision Making, 3.43) included questions about equitable salary distribution and teachers having the power to help make decisions about things that directly affect them. The highest rated category was Professional Growth (mean=3.97), which included questions about staff being encouraged to learn new skills and receiving guidance for professional development. See Table 15 below or in Appendix 1 for scores from each subscore in the organizational environment scale.

There were multiple statistically significant differences between staff who worked in a higher-quality program and those that did not. Interestingly, differences were not reported for constructs that were more descriptive of the programs, but instead for the support that

the provided to staff. For example, there were not differences in staff perceptions of collegiality, their physical settings, or the innovativeness of the program, but staff in lower-quality programs were significantly less likely to feel supported in their role by supervisors, professional development opportunities, and role clarity. Full versions of the questions that make up each sub score can be found in the staff survey in Appendix 2 under the “Organizational Environment” section.

### **Do teachers feel they have the knowledge, skills, resources, and support necessary to do their jobs well?**

We asked teachers three questions from the Role Perceptions Survey, described in the measures section, to assess feelings of competence and support. Results showed nearly all teachers felt they have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs well (90.9%). About three-quarters of teachers stated they had enough resources to do their jobs well (72.7%), and two-thirds stated they got the support they need to do their jobs well (66.8%). Upon further analysis, there was no statistical difference between how teachers answered these questions and the quality rating of their programs. See Table 16 in Appendix 1 for a visual representation of results.

## **Results: Rate of Suspensions and Expulsions of Children from Programs by Current Staff**

Starting July 1, 2016, the Arkansas Department of Human Services implemented a statewide policy that child care centers accepting state voucher money would no longer be able to suspend or expel children without first contacting DHS for assistance. A new triage system called BehaviorHelp was set up in collaboration with Arkansas State University, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and other organizations with child care and child development expertise to field incoming requests for support and training related to this policy change.

BehaviorHelp support is individualized to each case request and ranges from a classroom observation with teacher training follow-up, to extensive counseling services for children by an early childhood mental health specialist. According to the policy, programs that receive state funding for ECE programs (both ABC and child care subsidies) are not permitted to suspend/expel children in their care.

### **How often are suspensions and expulsions occurring in Arkansas ECCE settings?**

We asked teachers to anonymously report instances of suspension and expulsion that have occurred in their centers during the last 12 months. To best understand the severity of suspensions/expulsions on average, we organized results based on the most severe action taken in each center, rather than count each type of suspension/expulsion as separate categories. For example, centers that had both a partial day suspension and an expulsion were counted under the expulsion category only.

With this in mind, 20.5% of teachers reported that they or someone in their center called a parent to pick up a child early (partial day suspension), 4.3% stated their center had at least one full-day suspension, and 6.3% had at least one expulsion.

**Table 15.**  
**Organization environment ratings for current ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

**Organizational Environment, n = 1,053**

*Teachers rated their organizational environments as passible, but in need of improvement. Staff in quality programs more highly endorsed support in their roles as educators than those in lower-quality settings.*

Construct	Definition	All Staff	Higher-Quality Programs	Lower-Quality Programs
Total Scale		3.77	3.74	3.62
Collegiality	Staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another.	3.80	3.79	3.70
Professional Growth***	Emphasis placed on staff's professional growth.	3.97	4.04	3.81
Supervisor Support**	Facilitative leadership providing encouragement, support, and clear expectations.	3.92	3.95	3.76
Clarity**	Policies, procedures, and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated.	3.89	3.92	3.74
Reward System	Fairness and equity in the distribution of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement.	3.19	3.20	3.13
Decision Making	Autonomy given to staff and the extent to which they are involved in centerwide decisions.	3.43	3.39	3.39
Goal Consensus*	Staff agree on the philosophy, goals, and educational objectives.	3.67	3.68	3.55
Task Orientation***	Good organizational effectiveness and efficiency.	3.63	3.66	3.49
Physical Setting	The spatial arrangement of the center helps staff in carrying out their responsibilities, including availability of supplies and materials.	3.75	3.78	3.71
Innovativeness	The center adapts to change and encourages staff to find creative ways to solve problems.	3.96	3.97	3.88

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. + $P < .10$ , \* $P < .05$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \*\*\* $P < .001$ . Full versions of the questions can be found in the Organizational Environment section of the survey (Appendix 2).

## Results: Important Factors in Planning to Leave from Current Staff

The following section discusses when current staff are likely to leave the field entirely, and the factors that are important in that decision for those who report planning to leave within two years.

### When are current teachers planning to leave the field?

Nearly half of the workforce planned to continue teaching at least six more years (48.1%), while nearly a quarter planned to leave within five years (22.4%) See Table 17 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### What factors are important in deciding to exit the ECCE workforce?

Roughly, 1 in 10 current teachers (9.2%) reported planning to leave the workforce within the next two years. Another 30% of the workforce reported that they were not sure how long they will remain in the field. We asked those who planned to leave the field within the next two years and those who were unsure of how long they would remain in the field their reasons for potentially leaving. Overwhelmingly, staff reported financial reasons (72%) (wanting better pay, better benefits, or career advancement) as “important” or “very important” in their decision. This was followed by classroom management is stressful (35.2%) and retirement (28.6%).

### What kinds of teachers are more likely to consider leaving the field?

We compared ECCE teachers who stated financial reasons as important in their decision to potentially leave the field to those teachers who are not planning to leave the field. There was not a significant association for job role (being a lead or assistant teacher), ages of the children served, participating in expulsion/suspension activities, quality of the classroom, nor urban versus rural settings. However, there were multiple significant differences identified, suggesting some teachers were more likely to leave the ECCE field for financial reasons than others.

Those staff were more likely to be:

1. Black staff (Race/Ethnicity;  $\chi^2=14.12$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $P=.003$ )
2. Without an ECCE-related education ( $\chi^2=6.06$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.014$ )
3. Less experienced (less than 10 years' experience in the field,  $\chi^2=17.85$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $P=.003$ )
4. Without an individualized plan for professional development ( $\chi^2=4.64$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=.03$ )
5. Compensated at a lower wage (planning to leave the field=\$11.34/hour, not planning to leave the field=\$13.16/hour,  $F=30.16$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ )
6. Fearful of instability in their employment ( $\chi^2=10.38$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ )
7. Unable to meet their basic needs ( $\chi^2=16.33$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ )
8. Food insecure ( $\chi^2=4.94$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=.03$ )
9. Depressed ( $\chi^2=21.38$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P<.001$ )



Nearly 10% said they plan to leave the ECCE field within 2 years and nearly 25% plan to leave within 5 years.

## Recap: Survey Results from Current ECCE Teachers

Respondents' job roles were split 61.5% to 38.5% between lead and assistant teachers. Nearly two-thirds of current teachers had less than a college degree (in any field) and only about a third had an ECCE-related bachelor's degree or higher. When considering common ECCE credentials, as well as degrees, 61.1% of the field had some form of an ECCE-related education. Most teachers reported having 5-15 years of experience in the field.

Teachers reported being paid an average of \$19,365 per year with less than one year of experience, up to \$32,406 with 20 or more years of experience. Those with an ECCE-related education (related bachelor's degree or higher, regardless of credentials, OR any education with credentials) were paid an average of \$6,718 more per year than those without a related education. Sadly, this level of compensation translated into economic insecurities for teachers and their families; nearly three out of five teachers reported difficulty meeting their basic needs as defined in the Family Map Inventories (e.g., rent, utilities, transportation).<sup>22</sup> Further, 40% of the Arkansas ECCE workforce was food insecure. These economic and food security difficulties were more prevalent among those caring for infants and toddlers.

In addition to low compensation, teachers reported a lack of access to common workplace benefits. For example, approximately 60% were not provided retirement benefits and about half were not provided health and dental insurance. The lack of widespread health coverage is especially unfortunate because slightly more than a third of current teachers are at risk for depression, based on their answers to a widely used depression-screening tool (the Patient-Health Questionnaire-2). Again, depression was more common for teachers in infant or toddler classrooms.

Teachers reported common gaps in training. Less than half had an individualized professional development plan, and nearly half of teachers reported not receiving any form of training on how to properly implement their program's curriculum. Training for working with special populations is also needed. Only two-thirds of teachers stated they felt at least "generally prepared" to work with children who have socio-emotional or behavioral challenges, and only half said the same for children with developmental delays or disabilities. Similarly, while nearly all teachers said they have the knowledge and skills to do their job effectively, only three-quarters said they have access to the resources they need to do so, and only two-thirds said they get the support they need to do so. When asked about their organizational environment, teachers rated their workplaces as passable, on average, but in need of improvement. The categories most in need of improvement were an equitable distribution of salaries and having a say in decisions that directly affected them.

Approximately 40% of the workforce reported that they were planning to leave the field in the next two years or were not sure how long they planned to remain in the field. Of those planning to leave or unsure, nearly three-quarters (72%) reported at least one financial reason as key to their decision (wanting better pay, wanting better benefits, or no opportunity for career advancement).

Those who left the field for financial reasons were significantly more likely to 1) Identify as Black, 2) Not have an ECCE-related education, 3) Be less experienced on average, 4) Work in

---

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.thefamilymap.org/>



programs that do not use individualized professional development plans, 5) Be compensated at a lower wage on average, 6) Be more fearful of instability in their employment, 7) Be unable to meet their basic economic needs, 8) Screen positive for food insecurity, and (9) Screen as highly at-risk for depression.

## Results: Demographics, Experience, and Compensation of Past Staff

The following section reports on the demographics of former staff, the quality rating of their former employer, their level of education and experience before leaving the field, as well as the factors that were important in their decision to leave.

### What is the demographic makeup of those that have left the field?

Our sample of former ECCE teachers was nearly a decade younger and slightly less white than both those who are still in the field (31.0 years median age versus 40 still in the field; 35.3% non-White versus 29.1% still in the field). Assistant teachers (52.9%) were slightly more likely to have left the field than lead teachers (47.1%) and similar to current staff, nearly all former teachers identified as female (98.1%). See Table 18 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### In what types of settings did former teachers typically work?

Former teachers were more likely to work in urban counties than rural ones (61.3% versus 38.7%) and worked primarily with preschool aged children (48.8%). On average, former teachers were employed in lower-quality programs. Only 26.5% of former teachers worked in a higher-quality program compared to 56.1% of current teachers. It is worth noting, however, that former teachers were far more likely to not complete enough questions for us to assign their program a quality rating, which may have affected this result. Programs were rated as “higher-quality” if teachers told us the programs held a Better Beginnings level three rating or were funded by ABC, Head Start, or Early Head Start. This quality standard was chosen because level three is the highest Better Beginnings rating and programs receiving funds from these streams are subject to enhanced quality standards as a condition of their funding. See Table 19 in Appendix 1 for full results.

### How educated and experienced were former teachers?

When both education in a related field and credentials were taken into account, 41.7% of former teachers had an ECCE-related education, compared to 61.1% of current teachers (ECCE-related education is considered an ECCE-related bachelor’s degree or higher, regardless of credentials, OR any level of education with one or more credentials).

Former teachers had less experience on average than current ones, with 61.9% of former teachers leaving the field within four years (versus 29.8% of current teachers) and 80.9% leaving within 10 years (versus 53.7% of current teachers). See Table 20 in Appendix 1 for full results on experience levels.

## What was the average compensation and benefits for former teachers?

Former teachers also reported significantly lower hourly pay (\$9.85 per hour) than current teachers. Unfortunately, the sample of former staff was small and differences based on experience or education could not be explored.

The previously employed ECCE workforce reported even less access to common workplace benefits than those who were still employed in the field. For example, although approximately 57% of currently employed ECCE teachers reported access to all types of insurance, those rates were closer to 40% for former ECCE teachers. Approximately 80% of the current ECCE workforce reported paid time off, compared to only about half (54.5%) of the former ECCE workforce. Further, less than half (18.2%) as many members of the former workforce reported having retirement benefits, compared current staff (41.7%). Interestingly, there was only one benefit that was higher for former staff (being offered free or reduced rate child care).

With regards to benefits associated with professional development, although the sample of current staff were more likely to be from higher-quality settings than former staff, there were not substantial differences in the financial supports available for professional development, with similar percentages of paid trainings for both groups. For a more detailed breakdown, see Table 21 above, or in Appendix 1.

## What factors were important in why teachers decided to leave the field?

Similar to current teachers, we asked staff who have left the ECCE field to rate a series of factors (low pay, benefits, stress, health issues, personal reasons, etc.) and how important these factors were in their decision to leave the ECCE field (see Past Staff section of the survey in Appendix 2 for a full listing). The most common reason was related to low pay, with 58.8% rating it “very important” or “important” in their decision to leave the ECCE field. Similarly, results showed that 70% of teachers that left did so for one of three financial-related reasons: wanting higher pay, better benefits, and/or career advancement (this figure is nearly identical to current teachers who reported planning to leave within two years).

To better understand this finding, we compared those who said a financial reason was “very important” or “important” in their decision to leave the ECCE field to those who left the field for a non-financial reason. Results showed that no statistically significant differences between the two groups in wages, ECCE-related education, length of time in the field, urban versus rural job setting, ages of children served, or the quality rating of their last center. However, African Americans were statistically overrepresented among those that left for financial reasons ( $\chi^2=15.85$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $P<.001$ ).

<b>Table 21.</b> <b>Job benefits offered to former ECCE teachers previously working in Arkansas</b>	
<b>Job benefits, former teachers</b> (n = 121)	<i>On average, only 40% of former teachers were offered insurance benefits at their last job.</i>
Insurance	Average = 39.7%
Health insurance	36.4%
Dental insurance	28.1%
Disability and/or life insurance	17.4%
Holidays and leave	Average = 54.5%
Paid vacation days	28.9%
Paid holidays	38.0%
Paid sick/personal days	42.1%
Maternity Leave	17.3%
Unpaid maternity leave	14.0%
Paid maternity leave	3.3%
Paid training	Average = 52.9%
Paid for training hours required by licensing	52.1%
Pay or stipend for additional training beyond required hours	14.0%
Cost reductions	Average = 54.5%
Free meals for staff	28.9%
Free/reduced child care fees	35.5%
Raises and Retirement	Average = 32.2%
Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education	23.1%
Retirement or pension plan	18.2%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from calculations.

## Ratings of Organizational Environments by Past Staff

The following section reports on former teachers' perceptions of their organizational environment/workplace culture.

### How do former teachers rate their work environment, organizational culture, and their administrators' leadership at work?

When asked about their organizational environment, former teachers rated their workplaces on organizational climate as lower on average than current teachers (3.43 on a 5-point scale). Upon closer analysis, former teachers said the categories that needed the most improvement were equitable distribution of salaries (also a worst category for current teachers) and frequency of unproductive meetings. See Table 22 below or in Appendix 1 for scores from each subscore in the organizational environment scale. Full versions of the questions that make up each subscore can be found in the staff survey in Appendix 2 under the Organizational Environment section.

Table 22. Organization environment ratings by former ECCE workforce in Arkansas.	
Organizational environment, former teachers, n = 120	<i>Former teachers rated the organizational environment at their last job lower than current teachers.</i>
Total Scale	3.43 out of 5.0
Collegiality	3.41
Professional Growth	3.71
Supervisor Support	3.42
(Job role) Clarity	3.50
Reward System	2.98
Decision Making	3.19
Goal Consensus	3.29
Task Orientation	3.21
Physical Setting	3.51
Innovation	3.70

Note: Full versions of the questions can be found in the Organizational Environment section of the survey (Appendix 2).

## Recap: Survey Results from Former Teachers

Our sample of former ECCE teachers was nearly a decade younger, less experienced, more likely to work in an urban county, and more likely to identify as a minority race than those currently in the field. On average, former teachers were employed in lower-quality programs, with 26.5% of former teachers employed in a higher-quality program, compared to 56.1% of current teachers. The former workforce was less educated on average than current teachers, with 41.7% of former teachers having an ECCE-related education compared to 61.1% of current teachers. Former teachers also reported lower average hourly pay than current staff (\$10.19 per hour vs. \$12.59) and fewer benefits. Mirroring current staff, 70% of former teachers said at least one financial reason was important or very important in their decision to leave the field.

## Results: Further examining financial differences between current and past staff

Because nearly three-quarters of staff reported planning to leave within two years or were unsure of remaining in the field for financial reasons, it was important to take a second look through a financial lens at the differences between current and former staff. To do so, we split staff into three groups: those that plan to leave within two years/or are unsure of remaining in the field for financial reasons (N=263), those that have already left the field for financial reasons (N=76), and those that plan to remain in the field for at least two more years (N=797).

### Are there demographic, educational, or experience-related differences between teachers in these three groups?

Teachers who identified as non-White and teachers without an early-childhood-related education were statistically overrepresented among *both* those that left for financial reasons and those that were planning to leave for financial reasons. Similarly, less experienced teachers, assistant teachers, and those from lower-quality programs were statistically more likely to have left the field for financial reasons (Race,  $\chi^2=16.47$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P<.001$ ; Education, ( $\chi^2=17.40$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P<.001$ ); Experience,  $\chi^2=42.96$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P<.001$ ; Assistant Teachers, ( $\chi^2=10.13$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P=.006$ ); Program Quality,  $\chi^2=32.03$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P<.001$ ). There were no significant differences based on urban/rural setting or ages of children served.

### Are there differences in wages between teachers in these three groups?

Those who left the field for financial reasons made the least money on average at \$9.85/hour, with those planning to leave for financial reasons making \$11.34/hour, and those planning to stay for at least two years making \$13.16/hour (all three pay rates were statistically different from each other,  $F=16.66$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P<.001$ ).

## Workforce Study of Instructional Staff: Focus Groups

In addition to the online surveys targeted at ECCE staff, two focus groups were conducted to get a deeper understanding of day-to-day experiences and challenges as well as how policymakers and advocates can best support the profession.

### Sampling Method

Originally, the two focus groups were to be held in the cities of Prescott and Marvell, the two communities targeted in the G2G project for which staff turnover rates were remarkably high (96% during 26 months). However, due to lack of sufficient response in the city of Marvell, the city of Conway was chosen as a substitute. Conway was selected to try to get representation from a community in a more urban setting rather than collecting data from only rural representation.

**Table 23.**  
**Demographics of focus group participants**

City, (# of participants)	Prescott (n = 16)	Conway (n = 18)
Racial makeup*	65% Black, 35% White	10% Black, 90% White
Center types	1 Private Pay, 1 Head Start	2 Private Pay (one faith-based program), 1 Head Start
Experience range	0.5 years to 28 years	0.5 years to 25 years
Average years of experience in ECCE	9.6 years	4.3 years

\*This number was estimated at the beginning of each focus group. All other information was self-reported. Average levels of experience among focus group participants were similar to those current teachers in our survey (most having 5-10 years of experience).

As a whole, programs in Conway have a higher average Better Beginnings level (a measure of child care quality in Arkansas) than programs in Prescott. In an effort to flatten this difference and avoid bias, the three Conway programs that participated in the focus group were matched by Better Beginnings level to Prescott programs. A total of 34 teachers participated in the focus groups (16 in Prescott and 18 in Conway). Most teachers worked in toddler classrooms, though all age groups were represented. Two assistant teachers who were assigned to classrooms to maintain ratio (i.e., they work with different ages based on need). Four family engagement specialists were also included in the focus groups, and demographics for each group can be found in Table 23.



## Question Guide

Each focus group was guided through a discussion on a range of topics around quality child care, what they were most and least prepared for on their first day in the field, the most challenging aspects of their jobs now, and their perceptions of the professional development available to them. We also asked what could be done to ensure new teachers are better prepared to enter the workforce, and how likely participants were to leave the ECCE field entirely for another sector (among other questions). The full list of questions can be found in Appendix 3.

## Common Themes

Four major themes emerged in our focus groups, most of which were reflective of what teachers shared through survey data: 1) Personal experiences were a common substitute for pre-service education; 2) High classroom ratios and behavior issues were the greatest challenges facing teachers; 3) Teachers wanted more coaching and mentorship, particularly in working with children with special needs and behavior problems; 4) Professional growth was hampered by a lack of financial support for and purposeful planning of continuing education.

### Personal experiences are a common substitute for pre-service education

When asked what aspects of their work participants were best prepared for when they began working in the field, personal experiences with children as a family member and in church groups clearly had the greatest influence on how teachers learned to work with children. Some participants explicitly stated that college (as programs currently stand) does not prepare you to work in ECCE, while many others said that they came into the field with no formal education or training. Those without this training often reported switching careers when they became parents as a way to maintain work/life balance.

Not surprisingly, participants consistently mentioned interacting/playing with the children as what they were most prepared to do on their first day. However, others said they were most prepared for non-teaching tasks like, “How to arrange the room to look inviting,” cleaning tables and making lunches, or working with other adults. Non-teaching tasks are indeed part of the job in ECCE positions, but it is worrying that even a minority of participants said those tasks are what they were best prepared for when entering the field.

Similarly, two participants shared their concern as parents that the training/education requirements were too low for those entering the field in Arkansas, “...I’m surprised there’s not more specifically defined education requirements for preschool teachers” and “As a parent, it’s very unsettling that I got hired into child care with no experience, that *anyone* could do that” (emphasis added).

### High classroom ratios and behavior issues are the greatest challenges facing teachers

When participants were asked to think back to their first days on the job and identify the most challenging issue for them, two issues were discussed at length in both groups: behavior challenges and managing a classroom with a high child-teacher ratio. One

participant with a little more than a year of experience said her biggest surprise was, "...how willing kids are to take advantage of you when they know you are new." Others talked about the difficulty calming tantrums or other classroom scenarios.

Similarly, participants said keeping kids focused and on task in high-ratio environments were very difficult for them as new teachers. One participant captured the feeling in the room when offering her story, "When I went into my first job...we had 20 kids and 7 of those had behavior issues. That's what makes people quit." Another participant talked about a new teacher in her center, "Her first day of on-the-job training was 8 infants, and they are counting her (for teacher/child ratio purposes) as trained already, but she's not. When you are brought on the first day, they count you for ratio and send you in." Another echoed this sentiment, "Right now it's just dump them in and see ya later!"

Participants in both groups said they spent most of their days addressing the needs of individual children and managing ratios, and little or no time was spent for instructional planning. This affected their ability to individualize their daily schedules and activities to children's specific needs or even to develop goals and plans for their classroom in general. One center, in particular, talked about their (unusual) ability to offer their teachers protected planning time and how it allowed them to deliver a higher-quality of care than they otherwise could.

### Teachers want more coaching and mentorship, particularly in working with children with special needs and behavior problems

Nearly all participants agreed that the lack of on-the-job training and mentorship was a problem, but those who had been exposed to intensive coaching-based and mentoring-based training in the past were particularly frustrated at the continued reliance on single-session training types.

One group talked at length about how ineffective they found single-session trainings, particularly when they were held in large settings. One participant said, "Show us, don't tell us. Stop bringing us to these huge trainings and lecturing us. Come to our classroom and show us what you're trying to teach", with another adding, "Quit renting out the ballroom at (local college) and bringing in speakers in these big trainings."

Although research suggests mentoring or coaching-based training models are effective ways for adults to learn to implement trainings in ECCE contexts,<sup>23</sup> this type of support does sharply increase costs. However, two participants took issue with the idea that centers and the state cannot afford better training, saying, "The worst part is (training) is (already) in their budget", and "... (the centers and the state) waste money on the wrong kinds of training."

Participants also agreed that they needed more and better on-the-job training and mentorship for new teachers. One center said they had opportunities for their new hires to observe experienced teachers for a few weeks before officially starting work. They also set aside dedicated time to discuss each child's personalities and needs with new staff.

---

<sup>23</sup> Howes, C., James, J., & Ritchie, S. (2003). Pathways to effective teaching. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18(1), 104-120.

These practices were not universally shared by focus group members. However, participants were clear that having (or not having) a mentor at their job impacted their professional development and confidence in the classroom and that they highly value this support for new staff as well.

Participants in both cities talked about the need for coaching, mentoring, and external support for working with children with developmental disabilities, autism, and those who have experienced high levels of trauma at home. Participants readily stated they were doing the best they could, but felt in over their head in many instances and saddened they did not know how to best help children in these situations.

One participant mentioned that there was a clear need to have social workers or trauma specialists available to work with children with high levels of trauma and/or those in foster care or with family instability. Another felt that private pay centers often sought out children with developmental disabilities for financial gain (because of the higher Medicaid reimbursement rates) without properly training their staff on how to work with this population. Training on teacher-family relationships/communication (family engagement) and behavior-focused training were also mentioned as needs, though not by both groups.

### **Professional growth is hampered by a lack of financial support for and purposeful planning of continuing education**

Disagreement existed between the two groups in the availability and accessibility of both in-person and online professional development opportunities. However, lack of reimbursement for the gas/mileage participants used to get to training was a common issue. Teachers in rural areas reported having fewer nearby opportunities for in-person training, making their cost burden for traveling even greater. Both groups also mentioned they were not paid for professional development that occurred after normal business hours or on weekends.

Noting these challenges, we asked one group how they decided which training to attend. Nearly everyone agreed their main objective was just to pick up their required hours. One participant said, “We don’t get paid for more than 25 hours of training (in a year), so even if something is interesting, I won’t go over my 25 hours.” Another added, “There’s a lot out there, but if you’re not getting paid there’s not a lot of incentive.”

Continuing with discussions about training, some participants talked about the arbitrary nature of some of their required training and/or their belief that some of the training provided do not align with their own training priorities. For example, one participant said, “Our last in-service was a total waste of time. We spent five hours learning what to do if there was an earthquake and how to keep parents’ information and records properly. We can’t even keep that stuff (parent files) based on our center rules”. Another agreed, “I had a whole day on bus transport training. I don’t need that. I need training on my kids”. A third participant noted too much of training was devoted to policy and procedures, or similar topics that were adult-adult centered, rather than training that was adult-child centered.

While several teachers talked about the lack of organized structure or clear communication involved in planning of trainings at their centers, one participant described a particularly bad experience, saying “For one training I was at, we didn’t even know we had training. They pulled us into a room and showed a few Conscious Discipline CDs, and I didn’t even get to go to their (Conscious Discipline’s) real training for over a year.”

## Ranking Participants’ Concerns and How to Best Support Them

We were particularly interested in what early childhood educators believed are the most challenging aspects of their job or burdens that affected the field as a whole, as well as what specific ways administrators can help them feel supported as professionals. Rather than simply ask for a list of these things, we used an interactive activity popularized in the International Development field called Participatory Ranking Methodology (PRM).

PRM allows facilitators to engage their group in collective decision making about not only what should be on the list and how issues should be ranked, but also in how much more (or less) important each issue is compared to one another. Our preparation and execution steps for PRM appear in Appendix 3, and a more detailed explanation of this method and its many uses can be found here.<sup>24</sup>

The following pages display the results of our PRM activities. As mentioned above, each group created and ranked their own lists for the most challenging aspects of their job/burdens that affected the field and for the ways administrators and policymakers can best support them as professionals. For reporting purposes, the lists were combined to create one master list for each topic. Individual items still maintain the score they were given by their original group and have been re-ranked for the master list based on those original scores. In cases where both groups had the same item on their respective lists, the scores were averaged for the master list. A full list of all PRM items and their scores can be found in Appendix 3.

## One Minute with Your Senator

We asked participants what they would tell their senators or representatives (state or national) about how child care can be improved if they had only one minute of their time. As with the PRM activity, both groups were nearly unanimous in choosing two topics: low wages and high teacher-child ratios. One participant summed up the discussion by saying, “Quality care comes at a quality price. Not minimum wage...I made more money flipping burgers at Sonic (as a manager) than I do working with human beings.” Others followed up by saying child-teacher ratios would have to come down for job satisfaction and quality of care to increase across the field.

---

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cpcnetwork.org/resource/prm-a-brief-guide/>

**Table 24.**

**Participatory Ranking: What things do your program director and/or regional director currently do or could start doing that would make you feel supported as a teacher?**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>How They Do/Could Support</b>	<b>Supporting Quote(s)</b>
T1	100/100	Open door policy and open communication with us	n/a
T1	100/100	Offers solutions to teachers' problems and models what works.	"Our director isn't just stuck in the office, she works with us and knows the kids."
3	95/100	Paid time off	n/a
4	92/100	Start paying for professional development time after hours	n/a
5	84/100	Paid/paying for CDA credentials	n/a
6	75/100	Performance incentives	"We get a half a day off per year if there are no child injuries."

\*Scores under 70/100 are not shown above.

**Table 25.****Participatory Ranking: What is the most challenging or burdensome aspect of your work?**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Supporting Quote(s)</b>
1	100/100 (Average)	Low compensation and lack of raises	<p>"I've been there for 18 years and I still make minimum wage..."</p> <p>"I made more money flipping burgers at Sonic than I do taking care of human beings...people don't realize how little we get paid."</p>
2	94/100 (Average)	High child-teacher ratios	"I would like my job 100x more if there were lower ratios."
3	89/100	High teacher turnover	n/a
4	85/100	Lack of availability of behavior specialists to help in classrooms	n/a
5	83/100	Lack of coaching and mentoring-based training	<p>"Show us, don't tell us...Come into our classroom and SHOW us what you are trying to teach."</p> <p>"(These trainings) just go around the issue. Come next to me, side by side, and help me as it's happening."</p> <p>"We need side by side coaching."</p>
6	78/100	Threatening/punitive attitudes and lack of respect from administration	<p>"I feel scared every day I could lose my job for any reason at all"</p> <p>"Don't just threaten us about watching the camera (help us)."</p>
7	73/100	Lack of behavior management strategies other than Conscious Discipline	<p>"Conscious Discipline is their pacifier. It's doesn't really fix the problem."</p> <p>"For some kids it doesn't work"</p>
T8	70/100	Heavy load of paperwork	n/a
T8	70/100 (Average)	Lack of free or highly discounted tuition when your own kid(s) attends your center.	"A lot of people have (their own) kids in the centers they are working in... We are basically giving them (the centers) our paycheck back."

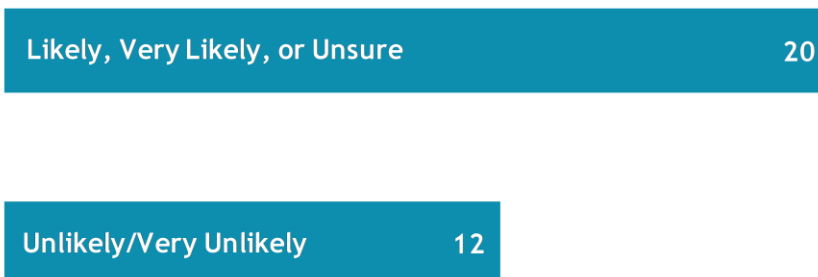
\*Scores under 70/100 are not shown above. "Average" represents the average score for a topic in cases where it appeared in both groups.



## Leaving the Field

To wrap up our discussions, we asked participants to close their eyes and think about their time in the ECCE field as a whole: what they enjoyed about it, what had been tough, and how they felt in the morning driving into work. After a few moments for reflection, we asked participants to raise their hand (with eyes still closed) to show how likely they were to leave the ECCE field at some point for work in a different sector (very unlikely, unlikely, not sure, likely, very likely). As the chart below shows, most participants were likely or very likely to leave the field or were not sure about whether they would stay.

**Figure 2: Most focus group participants eventually plan to leave the ECCE field or are unsure of their future.**



## Recap: Focus Group Results from Current Teachers

Common themes seen in focus groups included:

1. Personal experiences were a common substitute for pre-service education;
2. High classroom ratios and behavior issues were the greatest challenges facing teachers;
3. Teachers wanted more coaching and mentorship, particularly in working with children with special needs and behavior problems;
4. Professional growth was hampered by a lack of financial support for and purposeful planning of continuing education.

The top five challenges or burdens that focus group teachers reported were: 1) low compensation and lack of wage increases, 2) high child-teacher ratios, 3) high teacher turnover, 4) lack of availability of behavior specialists to help in classrooms, and 5) lack of coaching and mentor-based training. Because of these challenges, most focus group teachers either said they eventually plan to leave the ECCE field or were unsure if they would stay.

## General Discussion

When comparing our results from nearly 1,500 teachers participating in our surveys and focus groups, many of the same themes emerged—namely a workforce that is poorly compensated, often lacks access to basic professional benefits and quality professional development, and currently struggles when working with children with challenging behavior.

Financial reasons were the largest driver of the high turnover rates seen throughout much of the state. Results showed that nearly three-quarters of current teachers who were uncertain of their future in ECCE were considering leaving the field primarily for financial reasons. Mirroring this, a nearly identical percentage of former teachers also cited financial reasons as key to their decision to leave the field. Similarly, low pay was the top-rated issue in both focus groups when we asked teachers to name the most challenging or burdensome aspect of their work. One focus group participant summed up the financial difficulties the workforce faces in sharing her story, “Quality care comes at a quality price. Not minimum wage...I made more money flipping burgers (as a manager) at Sonic than I do working with human beings.”

In addition to low compensation, teachers reported a wide lack of access to common workplace benefits: less than half had access to health or dental insurance and less than two-thirds received any form of paid time off. Sadly, this level of compensation translated into economic insecurities for teachers and their families, as nearly three out of five teachers reported difficulty meeting their basic needs, as defined in the Family Map Inventories (e.g., rent, utilities, transportation).<sup>25</sup> Further, 40% of the AR ECCE workforce were food insecure. Unsurprisingly, a third of current teachers were at risk for depression based on their answers to a widely used depression screening tool.<sup>26</sup> From survey data, economic and food insecurity and depression appeared more often for those caring for infants and toddlers than staff caring for other age groups.

Focus group participants in both groups discussed the commonality of personal experience as a substitute for education and professional training, which also played out in our survey results. When considering both college degrees and related credentials, nearly 40% of current teachers did not have an ECCE-related education. Personal experience is certainly valuable in the field; however, scientific evidence suggests that college education in ECCE is associated with more optimal child outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, teachers in our focus groups repeatedly mentioned a desire for more coaching and mentoring support in their roles. Current teachers in our



“Quality care comes at a quality price. Not minimum wage...”

I made more money flipping burgers (as a manager) at Sonic than I do working with human beings.”

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.thefamilymap.org/>

<sup>26</sup> The Patient-Health Questionnaire-2

<sup>27</sup> NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (1999). Child outcomes when child care center classes meet recommended standards for quality. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(7), 1072-1077.

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2001). Nonmaternal care and family factors in early development: An overview of the NICHD study of early child care. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(5), 457-492.

survey also reported large gaps in what would be considered best practices for training, with less than half having an individualized professional development plan and more than a third said that they have not received any formal or informal training on implementing their program's curriculum. Similarly, around a third of teachers reported feeling they do not get the support necessary to optimally perform their jobs. A final key impediment to professional development in our state is that only half the ECCE field reported getting paid for training outside of normal business hours (this was a topic of much discussion in the focus groups as well), which incentivizes center directors and teachers to choose trainings based on location and hours, not relevance to their professional needs.

When examining the types of training that teachers most commonly attended in the last year, linkages with our focus group results also emerged—single topic, one-session trainings were the most common form of professional development teachers attended in the last year (50.9%). However, only 16.2% of teachers said they received mentoring/coaching-based training and only 9.3% had training based on extended classroom observations. Focus group participants talked at length about what they felt was a misallocation of resources toward single topic/session trainings and expressed a strong desire for more mentoring and coaching-based support.

## Recommendations

There are costs associated with turnover, including:

- Lost opportunities to improve and sustain higher levels of quality,<sup>28</sup>
- Disruptions to classroom teams that can lead to more departures, and
- Costs of recruiting, hiring, and training replacement staff.<sup>29</sup>

With the above in mind, we recommend the following as priorities to improve the working lives of our ECCE workforce and reduce the turnover that is affecting the field's ability to deliver high-quality care to Arkansas's children.

### 1. Explore options for increasing teachers' pay and benefits.

States have implemented multiple techniques for increasing stability in the ECCE workforce, including strategies that comprise supplementing salaries with stipends and through targeted tax credits.<sup>30</sup> Stipend strategies, like WAGE\$,<sup>31</sup> provide education-based salary supplements to ECCE educators based on their education and years in the field. States have also implemented tax credits for ECCE staff to incentivize education and retention. For example, Louisiana and Nebraska have refundable tax credits for ECCE staff and directors that are tied to the quality rating of the program in which they work, their education level, and years in the field.

While preschool teachers in higher-quality settings (state-funded and federally funded pre-

---

<sup>28</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2016.pdf> (Page 31)

<sup>30</sup> <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2016.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <http://teachechnationalcenter.org/child-care-wage/>

kindergarten programs) were among the highest paid, it should be noted that their annual wages are below those of kindergarten teachers, whose average annual salary \$45,850.<sup>32</sup> Some states have worked to prevent turnover in state pre-kindergarten programs by introducing pay parity policies, which equalize compensation and benefits between staff in pre-kindergarten and K-12.<sup>33</sup> Pay parity policies can also be instituted between teachers paid by state resources, but who are not employed in similar types of programs (i.e., public versus private programs). For example, cost modeling completed by UAMS/RED demonstrated a nearly \$10,000 salary differential for ABC teachers working in school-based versus community-based settings.

## **2. Support mentoring- and coaching-based training types, including when working with children with behavioral and other special needs.**

There is general agreement that more positive gains are produced when ECCE teacher training has the following characteristics:<sup>34</sup> 1) extended, continuous format with each session building on earlier sessions rather than one-day, “one-shot” type courses, 2) fixed curriculum that provides room to individualize examples, context, and delivery strategies, 3) participants have opportunities to apply their knowledge, 4) trainer observation and feedback related to classroom implementation, and 5) participants have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and to share their accomplishments and challenges.

## **3. Find ways to support and incentivize additional college-level education for current staff.**

As the cost of tuition is a great obstacle in raising the level of teacher education, some states have developed infrastructures to subsidize tuition, most notably Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood)<sup>35</sup> programs. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarships tie education, compensation, and retention together, awarding increased compensation upon attainment of a prescribed number of college credit hours. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood removes some of the typical barriers to college education through payment for most of tuition costs, books, travel (including requiring paid release time), as well as providing a scholarship counselor. Arkansas has traditionally supported scholarship opportunities for ECCE staff to attain a CDA credential, but funding for that program was reallocated into programmatic supports within Better Beginnings.

## **4. Explore additional options to support staff who are caring for our youngest children.**

Efforts to improve the training and stability of the workforce caring for infants and toddlers would likely reduce the need for later behavioral interventions for children. Arkansas currently reimburses programs at a higher rate for infant/toddler care based on the program’s quality rating. Additional support for the infant/toddler workforce through pay parity policies, higher salary supplements, and increased opportunities for college education in ECCE has the potential to greatly benefit the quality of infant/toddler care in our state.

---

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_ar.htm#25-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ar.htm#25-0000)

<sup>33</sup> [http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Pre-K-Parity-Report\\_Final.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Pre-K-Parity-Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> A. S. Epstein, 1993; National Research Council, 2001; Spodek, 1996; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2005

<sup>35</sup> <http://teachecnationalcenter.org/t-e-a-c-h-early-childhood/>

## Appendix 1: Tables

This appendix contains copies of every table and figure shown in the body of the report in addition to a selection of tables and figures that were described verbally in the report.

<b>Table 1.</b> <b>Sampling representativeness: AR ECCE field at large versus our sample.</b>			
	<b>Field at large</b>	<b>Our sample</b>	
	Estimated Staff (% of Total)	Current Staff (% of Total)	Past Staff (% of Total)
<b>Rural counties</b>	5,048 (32%)	471 (42%)	45 (40%)
Lower-Quality	2,783 (18%)	161 (14%)	28 (25%)
Higher-Quality	2,265 (14%)	310 (28%)	17 (15%)
<b>Urban counties</b>	10,745 (68%)	647 (58%)	69 (60%)
Lower-Quality	6,745 (43%)	246 (22%)	46 (40%)
Higher-Quality	4,000 (25%)	401 (36%)	23 (20%)

<b>Table 2.</b> <b>Demographics and job role of ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Age</b> (n = 1,158)	<i>The field was similar in age to the general population in Arkansas and the workforce in other states.</i>
Median Age	40.0 years
<b>Sex</b> (n = 1,224)	<i>Nearly all of those in the ECCE Arkansas workforce was female.</i>
Female	98.4%
Male	1.6%
<b>Race</b> (n = 1,220)	<i>Our sample was racially similar to the general population of Arkansas.</i>
Caucasian	70.8%
African-American	19.3%
Hispanic	5.1%
Other	4.7%
<b>Primary language spoken</b> (n = 1,220)	<i>Nearly all of our sample spoke English as their primary language.</i>
English	97.1%
Spanish	2.5%
Other	0.4%
<b>Job role</b> (n = 1,142)	<i>Each lead teacher had an average of 0.6 assistant teachers in their classroom.</i>
Lead Teacher (center-based)	61.5%
Assistant Teacher (center-based or family child care home)	38.5%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.



<b>Table 3.</b> <b>Employment settings of ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>County of employment</b> (n = 1,141)	<i>The workforce was split relatively evenly between urban and rural settings.</i>
Urban	57.5%
Rural	42.5%
<b>Primary age group of classroom</b> (n = 1,154)	<i>The majority of teachers worked primarily with three-five year olds.</i>
Infants/Toddlers (0-35 months)	27.3%
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	59.8%
School age (6+ years)	5.2%
Mixed ages (family child care homes)	7.7%
<b>Program quality rating</b> (n = 1,309)	<i>More than half of programs were rated as higher-quality due to a Better Beginnings level three rating or the quality standards inherent in their funding streams.</i>
High-Quality	56.1%
Lower-Quality	43.9%
<b>Better Beginnings level</b> (n = 1,175)	<i>1 in 5 child care programs were not part of the Better Beginnings quality improvement system.</i>
Not part of Better Beginnings	20.5%
Level 1	14.6%
Level 2	6.2%
Level 3	24.6%
Part of Better Beginnings, unsure of level	19.3%
Unsure if part of Better Beginnings	14.8%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Programs were rated as “higher-quality” if teachers told us the program held a Better Beginnings level three rating or was funded by ABC, Head Start, or Early Head Start. This standard of quality was chosen because level three is the highest Better Beginnings rating and programs receiving funds from these streams are subject to enhanced quality standards as a condition of their funding.

<b>Table 4.</b> <b>Education level of ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Education level</b> (n = 1,141)	<i>A third of the workforce had neither a related college degree nor early education credentials.</i>
Less than a bachelor's degree <i>without</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials	Total = 34.1%
Some high school	1.5%
High school/GED	10.5%
Some college	14.9%
Associate's degree	7.2%
Less than a bachelor's degree <i>with</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials	Total = 28.6%
High school/GED + credentials	5.5%
Some college + credentials	12.2%
Associate's degree + credentials	10.9%
Any degree in <i>unrelated</i> field	Total = 6.4%
Without credentials	4.7%
+ credentials	1.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher in <i>related</i> field, regardless of credentials	Total = 30.7%
Bachelor's degree	21.4%
Master's degree or higher	9.3%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

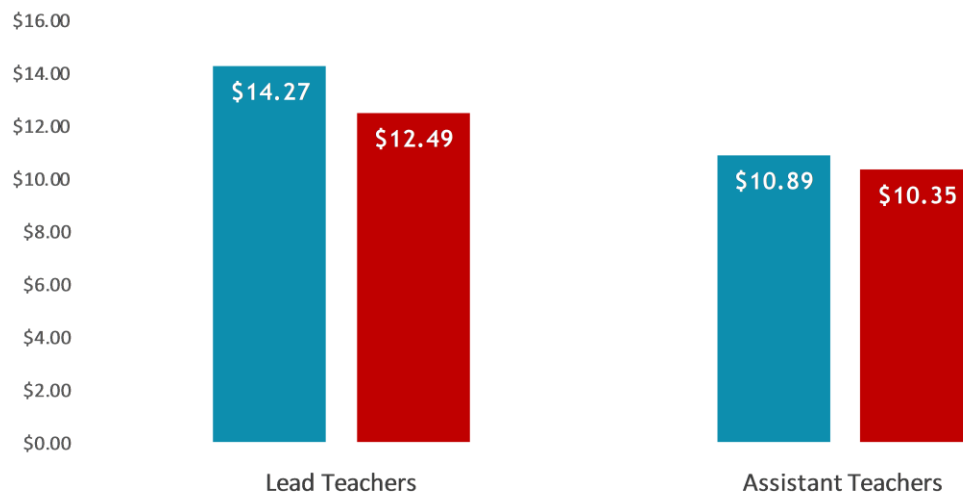
<b>Table 5.</b> <b>Experience level of ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Experience level, years</b> (n = 1,141)	<i>Most of Arkansas's teachers were at the mid-level of experience, with 5-15 years in the classroom</i>
Less than 1 year	2.5%
1-4 years	27.3%
5-10 years	23.9%
11-15 years	19.3%
16-20 years	12.0%
20+ years	15.1%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

<b>Table 6.</b> <b>Hours worked per week for ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Experience level, years</b> (n = 1,141)	<i>The vast majority of teachers worked full-time schedules each week.</i>
Part time	Total = 15.3%
0-10 hours	3.3%
11-20 hours	5.8%
21-30 hours	6.2%
Full time	Total = 84.6%
31-40 hours	56.6%
41-50 hours	21.2%
51-60 hours	3.8%
60 hours or more	3.0%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

**Figure 1: There is a significant pay gap between Lead Teachers working in **higher-quality** and **lower-quality** settings.**



<b>Table 7.</b> <b>Average pay rate by experience level for ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>		
<b>Experience level, years</b> (n = 1,007)	<i>As expected, average pay increased with experience. However, pay rates remained well below the average individual income across Arkansans, which is \$51,694 per year for men and \$37,733 for women.</i>	
	Per Hour	Per Year
Less than 1 year	\$9.31	\$19,365
1-4 years	\$11.04	\$22,963
5-10 years	\$12.05	\$25,064
11-15 years	\$13.55	\$28,184
16-20 years	\$13.04	\$27,123
20+ years	\$15.58	\$32,406

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Average individual Arkansan pay is from 2015 and sourced from [datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/arkansas).



<b>Table 8.</b> <b>Average pay rate by education level for ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>		
<b>Education level</b> (n = 1,141)		
<i>As expected, pay typically increased with education and credentials. Only those with a master's degree in a related field exceeded the average individual income in Arkansas for women (\$37,733), and none met the average individual income for men (\$51,694). Arkansas's average pay for preschool teachers was \$31,700 and for kindergarten teachers was \$45,850.</i>		
Less than bachelor's degree, <i>without</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials		
	Per Hour	Per Year
Some high school	\$9.63	\$20,030
High school/GED	\$10.06	\$20,925
Some college	\$10.34	\$21,507
Associate's degree	\$11.69	\$24,315
Less than bachelor's degree, <i>with</i> CDA or AR Birth-PreK credentials		
High school/GED + credentials	\$10.56	\$21,965
Some college + credentials	\$11.59	\$24,107
Associate's degree + credentials	\$12.24	\$25,459
Any degree in <i>unrelated</i> field		
Without credentials	\$11.87	\$24,690
+ credentials	\$11.26	\$23,421
Bachelor's degree or higher in <i>related</i> field, regardless of credentials		
Bachelor's degree	\$15.50	\$32,240
Master's degree or higher	\$19.33	\$40,206

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Those with an ECCE-related education (bachelor's degree or higher in a related field OR any education level + credentials) are paid an average of \$6,718 more than those without a related education.

<b>Table 9.</b> <b>Job benefits offered to ECCE teachers working in Arkansas by quality of program</b>			
	All Staff (N=1,041)	Staff in Higher- Quality Programs (N=654)	Staff in Lower- Quality Programs (N=365)
Insurance***	57.1%	66.8%	40.8%
Health insurance***	53.0%	59.9%	36.1%
Dental insurance***	48.5%	54.2%	33.3%
Disability and/or life insurance***	37.9%	43.7%	24.3%
Holidays and leave***	81.6%	90.4%	72.6%
Paid vacation days	45.1%	43.1%	46.2%
Paid holidays***	64.3%	67.3%	53.8%
Paid sick/personal days***	66.5%	72.8%	49.8%
Maternity leave	27.0%	28.7%	24.1%
Unpaid maternity leave	19.6%	19.3%	18.9%
Paid maternity leave**	8.3%	9.3%	4.7%
Paid training***	59.2%	64.5%	49.9%
Paid for training hours required by licensing***	56.6%	60.8%	45.3%
Pay or stipend for additional training beyond required hours**	16.3%	18.1%	11.1%
Cost reductions	48.1%	48.5%	47.4%
Free meals for staff**	30.6%	33.1%	24.5%
Free/reduced child care fees*	28.8%	25.5%	32.3%
Raises and retirement***	53.5%	63.5%	36.8%
Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education***	29.5%	33.5%	18.6%
Retirement or pension plan***	41.7%	49.2%	24.3%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. + $P < .10$ , \* $P < .05$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \*\*\* $P < .001$ , chi-square comparisons for program quality.

<b>Table 10.</b> <b>Economic and food security levels of ECCE teachers working in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>In the last year, how many times have/has...</b> (n = 1,432, 1,117)	<i>Nearly a third of the workforce was at-risk for food and economic insecurity.</i>
Economic security	Economic Risk = 57.8%
...you been unable to afford medical care, dental care, or medicine?	41.2%
...you been unable to pay an important monthly bill, like rent, car payment, house repair, etc.?	41.1%
...you had problems with transportation b/c you could not afford gas, car repairs, bus/cab fees, or other transportation?	24.0%
...you had any utilities turned off because there wasn't enough money to pay them?	19.4%
Food security	Food Insecurity = 40.0%
...the food that you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more?	37.4%
...you or others in your house cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food	30.9%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Teachers who worked primarily with infants/toddlers (0-35 months) were slightly more likely to be at risk for food insecurity than those who worked primarily with other age groups. There was no significant difference in economic security based on age of children in the classroom or quality of program. There also was not a significant difference in food insecurity based on quality of program.

<b>Table 11.</b> <b>Level of curriculum training received among ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Training level</b> (n = 1,281)	<i>Over a third of the workforce has not received any formal or informal training on implementing their program's curriculum</i>
I taught myself	35.1%
I receive ongoing coaching	23.5%
I got training from the director	23.4%
I got training from the developer	14.1%
N/A, we do not use a curriculum	7.4%
Any formal or informal training/coaching	Total = 51.6%
Higher-Quality**	59.5%
Lower-Quality**	50.7%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. <sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ ,  $*P < .05$ ,  $**P < .01$ ,  $***P < .001$ .

<b>Table 12.</b> <b>Training types used for professional development among the ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Training types attended in the last year, by program quality level</b> (n = 1,281)	<i>Single topic, one-session trainings were the most commonly used way to deliver professional development to the field.</i>
Single topic, one-session training	Average = 60.5%
Higher-Quality***	64.7%
Lower-Quality***	52.9%
In-depth, multiple-session training	Average = 48.2%
Higher-Quality**	51.5%
Lower-Quality**	42.2%
Professional conferences	Average = 33.6%
Higher-Quality***	37.5%
Lower-Quality***	26.6%
Meeting with a mentor, coach, or consultant	Average = 19.2%
Higher-Quality**	21.9%
Lower-Quality**	14.5%
College classes/coursework	Average = 12.2%
Higher-Quality	11.6%
Lower-Quality	13.2%
Visit to other classrooms or centers (or family child care homes) to observe best practices	Average = 10.9%
Higher-Quality	9.8%
Lower-Quality	12.9%
Communities of practice or practitioner study groups	Average = 7.0%
Higher-Quality**	6.3%
Lower-Quality**	8.2%
Used quality training types	Average = 66.4%
Higher-Quality	67.4%
Lower-Quality	64.7%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. <sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ , \* $P < .05$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \*\*\* $P < .001$

**Table 13.**  
**Training content areas most often used for professional development among the ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

<b>Content areas covered in trainings ECCE teachers attended during the past year</b>		<i>Children's development and learning was the most popular content area for trainings among Arkansas's ECCE workforce.</i>		
		All Staff (N=1,041)	Staff in Quality Programs (N=654)	Staff in Lower Quality Programs (N=387)
Children's development and learning <sup>+</sup>		79.4%	81.3%	76.4%
Children's health, safety, and nutrition <sup>+</sup>		68.7%	70.6%	65.2%
Teacher-child interactions, including positive classroom climate and behavior management <sup>***</sup>		64.7%	67.7%	58.4%
Learning environments, curriculum implementation, and program quality <sup>***</sup>		54.9%	59.8%	46.0%
Collaborating, communicating with, and/or supporting families <sup>*</sup>		47.1%	49.4%	42.7%
Using observation and assessment to plan daily activities or child screening <sup>***</sup>		42.5%	47.9%	33.4%
Inclusion, participation, and learning for children with identified disabilities/delays		31.6%	32.7%	29.9%
Cultural and linguistic diversity		23.3%	22.8%	23.8%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Teachers in higher-quality programs were significantly more likely to have received training in children's development and learning and in learning environments, curriculum implementation, and program quality. <sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ , <sup>\*</sup> $P < .05$ , <sup>\*\*</sup> $P < .01$ , <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $P < .001$ .

<b>Table 14.</b> <b>Preparedness to work with children in special populations among the ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Feel “generally prepared” or “totally prepared” working with children who...</b> (n = 1,432)	<i>Nearly one-third of teachers did not feel prepared to work with children who have social-emotional and/or behavior challenges.</i>
have social-emotional and/or behavior problems	62.9%
Higher-Quality <sup>***</sup>	64.7%
Lower-Quality <sup>***</sup>	35.3%
have developmental delays/disabilities or special health care needs	56.1%
are learning English as a new language	39.3%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Teachers in lower-quality programs were significantly less likely to feel prepared to work with children who have social-emotional and/or behavioral problems than teachers in higher-quality programs (<sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ ,  $*P < .05$ ,  $**P < .01$ ,  $***P < .001$ ). No significant differences existed for the other two groups.



**Table 15.**  
**Organization environment ratings for current ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

**Organizational Environment, n = 1,053**

*Teachers rated their organizational environments as passible, but in need of improvement. Staff in quality programs more highly endorsed support in their roles as educators than those in lower-quality settings.*

Construct	Definition	All Staff	Higher-Quality Programs	Lower-Quality Programs
Total Scale		3.77	3.74	3.62
Collegiality	Staff are friendly, supportive, and trusting of one another.	3.80	3.79	3.70
Professional Growth <sup>***</sup>	Emphasis placed on staff's professional growth.	3.97	4.04	3.81
Supervisor Support <sup>**</sup>	Facilitative leadership providing encouragement, support, and clear expectations.	3.92	3.95	3.76
Clarity <sup>**</sup>	Policies, procedures, and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated.	3.89	3.92	3.74
Reward System	Fairness and equity in the distribution of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement.	3.19	3.20	3.13
Decision Making	Autonomy given to staff and the extent to which they are involved in centerwide decisions.	3.43	3.39	3.39
Goal Consensus <sup>*</sup>	Staff agree on the philosophy, goals, and educational objectives.	3.67	3.68	3.55
Task Orientation <sup>***</sup>	Good organizational effectiveness and efficiency.	3.63	3.66	3.49
Physical Setting	The spatial arrangement of the center helps staff in carrying out their responsibilities, including availability of supplies and materials.	3.75	3.78	3.71
Innovativeness	The center adapts to change and encourages staff to find creative ways to solve problems.	3.96	3.97	3.88

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. <sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ , <sup>\*</sup> $P < .05$ , <sup>\*\*</sup> $P < .01$ , <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $P < .001$ . Full versions of the questions can be found in the Organizational Environment section of the survey (Appendix 2).

<b>Table 16.</b> <b>Feelings of support and competency among ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Support and competency</b> (n = 1,432)	<i>One-third of teachers said they did not get the support they needed to do their jobs well.</i>
	Agree or Strongly Agree
I have the knowledge and skills to do my job well	90.9%
I have enough resources to do my job well	72.7%
I get the support I need to do my job well	66.8%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Upon further analysis, there was no statistical difference between how teachers answered based on the quality of their programs.

<b>Table 17.</b> <b>Years until current staff plan to leave the ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Planning to exit workforce in...</b> (n = 1,224)	<i>Nearly a quarter of current teachers planned to leave the field within 5 years.</i>
Less than 1 year	2.3%
1-2 years	6.9%
3-5 years	13.2%
6-10 years	14.6%
11 years or more	33.5%
Not sure	29.5%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

<b>Table 18.</b> <b>Demographics and job role of former ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Age</b> (n = 126)	<i>Those who left the field were younger than the general population in Arkansas and nine years younger than those still in the field.</i>
Median Age	31.0 years
<b>Sex</b> (n = 127)	<i>Similar to those in the field, those that left were nearly all female.</i>
Female	98.1%
Male	3.9%
<b>Race</b> (n = 127)	<i>Additional analysis showed African Americans were significantly more likely to leave the field than was statistically expected.</i>
Caucasian	67.7%
African-American	23.6%
Hispanic	6.3%
Other	2.4%
<b>Primary language spoken</b> (n = 127)	<i>All teachers who left the field spoke English as their primary language.</i>
English	100%
Spanish	-
Other	-
<b>Job role</b> (n = 138)	<i>Assistant teachers were more likely to leave the field than lead teachers.</i>
Lead teacher (center-based)	47.1%
Assistant teacher (center-based or family child care home)	52.9%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

<b>Table 19.</b> <b>Employment settings of the former ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>County of employment</b> (n = 119)	<i>Former teachers were more likely to have worked in urban counties than current ones.</i>
Urban	61.3%
Rural	38.7%
<b>Primary age group of classroom</b> (n = 123)	<i>Like current teachers, most former teachers worked with 3-5 year olds.</i>
Infants/Toddlers (0-35 months)	33.3%
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	48.8%
School age (6+ years)	7.3%
Mixed ages (family child care homes)	10.6%
<b>Program quality rating</b> (n = 162)	<i>Former teachers were much less likely than current ones to have worked in high-quality programs (see notes below).</i>
Higher-quality	26.5%
Lower-quality	48.8%
Not enough information to assign quality	24.7%
<b>Better Beginnings level</b> (n = 126)	<i>Nearly one in four former teachers worked at a program that was not part of the Better Beginnings quality improvement system.</i>
Not part of Better Beginnings	23.8%
Level 1	12.7%
Level 2	7.1%
Level 3	12.7%
Part of Better Beginnings, unsure of level	19.0%
Unsure if part of Better Beginnings	24.6%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations. Programs were rated as “higher-quality” if teachers told us the programs held a Better Beginnings level three rating or were funded by ABC, Head Start, or Early Head Start. This quality standard was chosen because level three is the highest Better Beginnings rating and programs receiving funds from these streams are subject to enhanced quality standards as a funding condition. Unlike current teachers, former teachers were much less likely to answer enough survey questions for us to assign their programs a quality rating. Because this may have affected the results, we included the percentage of those teachers without enough information to be assigned a category in this table as well as those for higher-quality and lower-quality.

<b>Table 20.</b> <b>Experience level of the former ECCE workforce in Arkansas.</b>	
<b>Experience level, years</b> (n = 142)	<i>The majority of teachers who left the field did so within their first 4 years.</i>
Less than 1 year	23.9%
1-4 years	38.0%
5-10 years	19.0%
11-15 years	5.6%
16-20 years	8.5%
20+ years	4.9%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from these calculations.

**Table 21.****Job benefits offered to ECCE teachers previously working in Arkansas**

<b>Job benefits, former teachers</b> (n = 121)		<i>On average, only 40% of former teachers were offered insurance benefits at their last job.</i>
Insurance		Average = 39.7%
Health insurance		36.4%
Dental insurance		28.1%
Disability and/or life insurance		17.4%
Holidays and leave		Average = 54.5%
Paid vacation days		28.9%
Paid holidays		38.0%
Paid sick/personal days		42.1%
Maternity leave		17.3%
Unpaid maternity leave		14.0%
Paid maternity leave		3.3%
Paid training		Average = 52.9%
Paid for training hours required by licensing		52.1%
Paid or stipend for additional training beyond required hours		14.0%
Cost reductions		Average = 54.5%
Free meals for staff		28.9%
Free/reduced child care fees		35.5%
Raises and retirement		Average = 32.2%
Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education		23.1%
Retirement or pension plan		18.2%

Note: Responses from participants who did not complete the entire survey were removed from calculations.

**Table 22.**  
**Organization environment ratings by former ECCE workforce in Arkansas.**

<b>Organizational Environment, Former Teachers n = 120</b>		<i>Former teachers rated the organizational environment at their last job lower than current teachers.</i>
Total Scale	3.43 out of 5.0	
Collegiality		3.41
Professional Growth		3.71
Supervisor Support		3.42
(Job role) Clarity		3.50
Reward System		2.98
Decision Making		3.19
Goal Consensus		3.29
Task Orientation		3.21
Physical Setting		3.51
Innovation		3.70

Note: Full versions of the questions can be found in the Organizational Environment section of the survey (Appendix 2).



**Table 23.**  
**Demographics of focus group participants.**

<b>City (# of participants)</b>	<b>Prescott (n = 16)</b>	<b>Conway (n = 18)</b>
Racial makeup*	65% Black, 35% White	10% Black, 90% White
Center types	1 Private Pay, 1 Head Start	1 Private Pay, 1 Head Start, 1 Faith-Based Private
Experience range	0.5 years to 28 years	0.5 years to 25 years
Average years of experience in ECCE	9.6 years	4.3 years

\*This number was estimated at the beginning of each focus group. All other information was self-reported. Average levels of experience among focus group participants were similar to current teachers in our survey (most having 5-15 years of experience).

**Table 24.**  
**Participatory Ranking: What things do your program director and/or regional director currently do or could start doing that would make you feel supported as a teacher?**

Rank	Score *	How They Do/Could Support	Supporting Quote(s)
T1	100/100	Open door policy and open communication with us	n/a
T1	100/100	Offers solutions to teachers' problems and models what works.	"Our director isn't just stuck in the office, she works with us and knows the kids."
3	95/100	Paid time off	n/a
4	92/100	Start paying for professional development time after hours	n/a
5	84/100	Paid/paying for CDA	n/a
6	75/100	Performance incentives	"We get a half a day off per year if there are no child injuries."

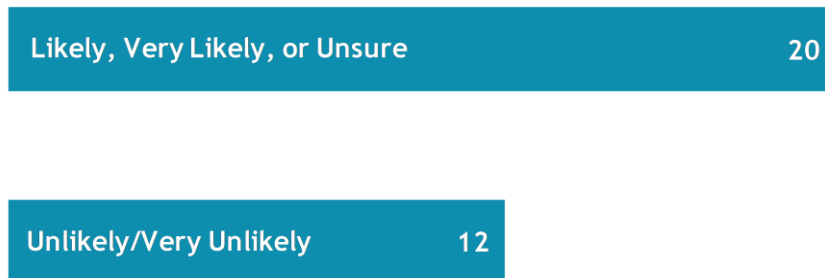
\*Scores under 70/100 are not shown above.

**Table 25.****Participatory Ranking: What is the most challenging or burdensome aspect of your work?**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Supporting Quote(s)</b>
1	100/100 (Average)	Low pay and lack of raises	<p>"I've been there for 18 years and I still make minimum wage..."</p> <p>"I made more money flipping burgers at Sonic than I do taking care of human beings...people don't realize how little we get paid."</p>
2	94/100 (Average)	High child-teacher ratios	"I would like my job 100 times more if there were lower ratios."
3	89/100	High teacher turnover	n/a
4	85/100	Lack of availability of behavior specialists to help in classrooms	n/a
5	83/100	Lack of coaching and mentor-based training	<p>"Show us, don't tell us...Come into our classroom and SHOW us what you are trying to teach."</p> <p>"(These trainings) just go around the issue. Come next to me, side by side, and help me as it's happening."</p> <p>"We need side by side coaching."</p>
6	78/100	Threatening/punitive attitudes and lack of respect from administration	<p>"I feel scared every day I could lose my job for any reason at all"</p> <p>"Don't just threaten us about watching the camera (help us)."</p>
7	73/100	Lack of behavior management strategies other than Conscious Discipline	<p>"Conscious Discipline is their pacifier. It's doesn't really fix the problem."</p> <p>"For some kids it doesn't work"</p>
T8	70/100	Heavy load of paperwork	n/a
T8	70/100 (Average)	Lack of free or highly discounted tuition when your own kid(s) attends your center.	"A lot of people have (their own) kids in the centers they are working in... We are basically giving them (the centers) our paycheck back."

\*Scores under 70/100 are not shown above. "Average" represents the average score for a topic in cases where it appeared in both groups.

**Figure 2: Most focus group participants eventually plan to leave the ECCE field or are unsure of their future.**



## Appendix 2: Staff Workforce Study

Confidential

Page 1 of 21

### Arkansas Early Childhood Workforce Study: Staff

**Purpose:** The purpose of this survey is to learn more about instructional staff employed in the Childcare and Early Childhood Education workforce. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and our funding partner, Arkansas Community Foundation, will use the information collected to promote policy to support the working lives of those in the field and further build the quality of childcare in our state.

Questions include background information, salary and benefits, workplace satisfaction, and emotional and physical wellbeing. The survey takes no more than 15 minutes to complete.

This survey is confidential and participation is voluntary: Any information you give will only be reported in group averages and will not be linked back to your specific answers. Data will not be shared beyond the purpose of this study.

Cash prizes: Complete the survey by November 6th to be entered into a drawing. You could win up to \$100!

Please DO NOT use the back button on your browser to navigate the survey. There are previous and next page buttons at the bottom of each survey page you can use for navigation.

---

---

**Note: This survey is only for instructional staff (Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and Teachers Aids). If you have a different roll, please exit the survey here.**

**Thanks!**

1. Are you currently employed with a childcare/early education program or family child care home?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

---

**Section 1: Past Employees**

---

1. What was your primary role in Early Childhood Education?

- ☐ Lead Teacher of a center-based program
- ☐ Assistant Teacher/Aide of a center-based program or family child care home

2. In total, how long did you work in the field of child care/early education?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-4 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

**3. How important are these factors in why you no longer work in the field?**

	Not at all important	Not that important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
I retired	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was no opportunity for career advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I went back to school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted a higher paying job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted better benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted a job that has more flexibility (e.g., working different or fewer hours)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management was stressful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I left for health reasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I left for other personal reasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What other reasons were important in your decision to leave the field?

4. What was your hourly pay at the time you left the childcare field?

- ☐ Under \$8.50  
☐ \$8.50  
☐ \$8.51-\$9.00  
☐ \$9.01-\$9.50  
☐ \$9.51-\$10.00  
☐ \$10.01-\$12.00  
☐ \$12.01-\$16.00  
☐ \$16.01-\$20.00  
☐ \$20.01-\$25.00  
☐ \$25.01+  
☐ Unsure

5. When you were employed in the child care/early education field, what kind of benefits did your last job have?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Free/reduced child care fees  
☐ Paid sick/personal/days  
☐ Paid vacation days  
☐ Paid holidays  
☐ Paid for training hours required by licensing  
☐ Pay or stipend for additional training beyond required hours  
☐ Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education  
☐ Retirement or pension plan  
☐ Health insurance  
☐ Dental insurance  
☐ Disability and/or life insurance  
☐ Free meals for staff  
☐ Paid maternity leave  
☐ Unpaid maternity leave

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school, but no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Some college courses, but not a degree
- ☐ Associate's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Master's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Doctoral degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ College degree, unrelated field

7. Did you have a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate at the time you left the field?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. Did you have an Arkansas Birth-PreK teaching credential at the time you left the field?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



9. What county did you work in at your last job in the child care/early education field?

- ☐ Arkansas
- ☐ Ashley
- ☐ Baxter
- ☐ Benton
- ☐ Boone
- ☐ Bradley
- ☐ Calhoun
- ☐ Carroll
- ☐ Chicot
- ☐ Clark
- ☐ Clay
- ☐ Cleburne
- ☐ Cleveland
- ☐ Columbia
- ☐ Conway
- ☐ Craighead
- ☐ Crawford
- ☐ Crittenden
- ☐ Cross
- ☐ Dallas
- ☐ Desha
- ☐ Drew
- ☐ Faulkner
- ☐ Franklin
- ☐ Fulton
- ☐ Garland
- ☐ Grant
- ☐ Greene
- ☐ Hempstead
- ☐ Hot Spring
- ☐ Howard
- ☐ Independence
- ☐ Izaard
- ☐ Jackson
- ☐ Jefferson
- ☐ Johnson
- ☐ Lafayette
- ☐ Lawrence
- ☐ Lee
- ☐ Lincoln
- ☐ Little River
- ☐ Logan
- ☐ Lonoke
- ☐ Madison
- ☐ Marion
- ☐ Miller
- ☐ Mississippi
- ☐ Monroe
- ☐ Montgomery
- ☐ Nevada
- ☐ Newton
- ☐ Ouachita
- ☐ Perry
- ☐ Phillips
- ☐ Pike
- ☐ Poinsett
- ☐ Polk
- ☐ Pope
- ☐ Prairie
- ☐ Pulaski
- ☐ Randolph
- ☐ St. Francis
- ☐ Saline
- ☐ Scott
- ☐ Searcy
- ☐ Sebastian
- ☐ Sevier
- ☐ Sharp
- ☐ Stone
- ☐ Union

10. In your last job, what were the ages of the children in your care?

- ☐ Van Buren
- ☐ Washington
- ☐ White
- ☐ Woodruff
- ☐ Yell

11. Was the room/class in which you worked part of the following programs?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Infants/Toddlers (0 - 35 months)
- ☐ Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)
- ☐ School Age (6+ years)
- ☐ Mixed ages (for example, family child care homes)

- ☐ Private Tuition (Parents Pay)
- ☐ Child Care Vouchers/Subsidies
- ☐ ABC (State Pre-K) or Preschool Development Grant Sites
- ☐ Early Head Start or Head Start
- ☐ Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Sites
- ☐ Unsure

12. Was your program part of Better Beginnings?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, Level 1
- ☐ Yes, Level 2
- ☐ Yes, Level 3
- ☐ Yes, Unknown Level
- ☐ Unsure

13. Sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

14. Age

15. Which racial/ethnic groups do you identify as?

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Multi-Racial
- ☐ Other

15. What other racial/ethnic group do you identify as?

16. What is your primary language (the language you are most comfortable using)?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Other

16. What other primary language are you most comfortable using?

---

**Section 2: Organizational Environment**


---

**Please think back to your last job in the childcare and early education field. Please rate these different aspects about what it was like to work there.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff were friendly and trusted one another.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Morale was high. There was a good team spirit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Staff were encouraged to learn new skills and competencies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The organization provided guidance for professional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Supervisor(s) were knowledgeable and competent.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Supervisor(s) provided helpful feedback.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Communication regarding policies and procedures is clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Job responsibilities were well defined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Salaries and benefits were distributed equitably.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Teachers helped make decisions about things that directly affected them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Staff and families felt free to express their opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Staff shared a common vision of what the center should be like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. The program was well planned and efficiently run.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Meetings were productive. Time was not wasted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The work environment was attractive and well organized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. There were sufficient supplies & equipment for staff to do their jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. Staff were encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. The organization implemented changes as needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Clearly planned goals and objectives existed for my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I had the knowledge and skills to do my job well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I had enough resources to do my job well.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I got the support I needed to do my job well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you would like to be entered into our cash drawing, please enter your email here.

---

If you do not have an email address, please enter your phone number use the following format:

---

501-583-6932

---

**Section 1: Demographics & Experience**

---

**Please tell us a little about yourself**

1. What is your primary job role?
- ☐ Lead Teacher of a center-based program  
☐ Assistant Teacher/Aide of a center-based program or family child care home
2. Sex
- ☐ Male  
☐ Female
3. Age
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which racial/ethnic groups do you identify as?
- ☐ African American  
☐ Caucasian/White  
☐ Hispanic/Latino  
☐ Native American  
☐ Asian/Pacific Islander  
☐ Multi-Racial  
☐ Other
4. What other racial/ethnic group do you identify as?
- \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your primary language (the language you are most comfortable using or is spoken at home)?
- ☐ English  
☐ Spanish  
☐ Other
5. What other primary language are you most comfortable using?
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you worked in the field of child care/early education?
- ☐ Less than 1 year  
☐ 1-4 years  
☐ 5-10 years  
☐ 11-15 years  
☐ 16-20 years  
☐ More than 20 years
7. How much longer do you plan to work in the childcare field?
- ☐ Less than one year  
☐ 1-2 years  
☐ 3-5 years  
☐ 6-10 years  
☐ 11 years or more  
☐ Not sure

**8. If you answered "Less than one year", "1-2 years", or "not sure" on the last question, how important are these factors in why you are considering no longer working in the field?**

**(Please ignore this heading if you answered otherwise)**

	Not at all important	Not that important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
I will be retiring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No opportunity for career advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want a higher paying job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want better benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am looking for a different job opportunity outside of child care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want a job that has more flexibility (e.g., working different or fewer hours)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management is stressful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am leaving for health-related reasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am leaving for other personal reasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What other reason are you considering no longer working in this field?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school, but no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Some college courses, but not a degree
- ☐ Associate's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Master's degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ Doctoral degree (related to education, early childhood, child development, or human services)
- ☐ College degree, unrelated field

10. Do you have a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Do you have an Arkansas Birth-PreK teaching credential?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. In what county do you work in the child care/early education field?

- ☐ Arkansas
- ☐ Ashley
- ☐ Baxter
- ☐ Benton
- ☐ Boone
- ☐ Bradley
- ☐ Calhoun
- ☐ Carroll
- ☐ Chicot
- ☐ Clark
- ☐ Clay
- ☐ Cleburne
- ☐ Cleveland
- ☐ Columbia
- ☐ Conway
- ☐ Craighead
- ☐ Crawford
- ☐ Crittenden
- ☐ Cross
- ☐ Dallas
- ☐ Desha
- ☐ Drew
- ☐ Faulkner
- ☐ Franklin
- ☐ Fulton
- ☐ Garland
- ☐ Grant
- ☐ Greene
- ☐ Hempstead
- ☐ Hot Spring
- ☐ Howard
- ☐ Independence
- ☐ Izaard
- ☐ Jackson
- ☐ Jefferson
- ☐ Johnson
- ☐ Lafayette
- ☐ Lawrence
- ☐ Lee
- ☐ Lincoln
- ☐ Little River
- ☐ Logan
- ☐ Lonoke
- ☐ Madison
- ☐ Marion
- ☐ Miller
- ☐ Mississippi
- ☐ Monroe
- ☐ Montgomery
- ☐ Nevada
- ☐ Newton
- ☐ Ouachita
- ☐ Perry
- ☐ Phillips
- ☐ Pike
- ☐ Poinsett
- ☐ Polk
- ☐ Pope
- ☐ Prairie
- ☐ Pulaski
- ☐ Randolph
- ☐ St. Francis
- ☐ Saline
- ☐ Scott
- ☐ Searcy
- ☐ Sebastian
- ☐ Sevier
- ☐ Sharp
- ☐ Stone
- ☐ Union



- ☐ Van Buren  
☐ Washington  
☐ White  
☐ Woodruff  
☐ Yell
13. In addition to your job in child care/early education, do you have another paid job?
- ☐ Yes, during the summer only  
☐ Yes, during the school year only  
☐ Yes, during the school year and summer  
☐ No
14. What is the age group for your primary room/class?
- ☐ Infants/Toddlers (0 - 35 months)  
☐ Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)  
☐ School Age (6+ years)  
☐ Mixed ages (for example, family child care homes)
15. Is your room/class part of the following kind of programs?  
(Check all that apply)
- ☐ Private Tuition (Parents Pay)  
☐ Child Care Vouchers/Subsidies  
☐ ABC (State Pre-K) or Preschool Development Grant Sites  
☐ Early Head Start or Head Start  
☐ Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Sites  
☐ Unsure
16. Is your program part of Better Beginnings?
- ☐ No  
☐ Yes, Level 1  
☐ Yes, Level 2  
☐ Yes, Level 3  
☐ Yes, Unknown Level  
☐ Unsure



---

**Section 2: Economics and Wellness**


---

1. Which of these best describes your average employment hours per week providing childcare/early childhood education?

- ☐ 0-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 21-30 hours
- ☐ 31-40 hours
- ☐ 41-50 hours
- ☐ 51-60 hours
- ☐ 60 or more hours

2. How much are you currently paid per hour?

- ☐ Under \$8.50
- ☐ \$8.50
- ☐ \$8.51-\$9.00
- ☐ \$9.01-\$9.50
- ☐ \$9.51-\$10.00
- ☐ \$10.01-\$12.00
- ☐ \$12.01-\$16.00
- ☐ \$16.01-\$20.00
- ☐ \$20.01-\$25.00
- ☐ \$25.01+
- ☐ Unsure

3) What types of benefits are you offered?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Free/reduced child care fees
- ☐ Paid sick/personal days
- ☐ Paid vacation days
- ☐ Paid holidays
- ☐ Paid for training hours required by licensing
- ☐ Pay or stipend for additional training beyond required hours
- ☐ Periodic increases in wages based on cost of living or performance/education
- ☐ Retirement or pension plan
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Dental insurance
- ☐ Disability and/or life insurance
- ☐ Free meals for staff
- ☐ Paid maternity leave
- ☐ Unpaid maternity leave

**This next section asks about your financial and emotional well-being. Remember this survey is confidential and your responses will not be linked back to you individually.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I worry about being laid off or having my work hours reduced	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I worry about being sent home without pay if child attendance in my program is low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	NONE		1 OR MORE		DON'T KNOW
6. In the last year, how many times did you have any of your utilities such as gas, electric, water, or telephone service turned off because there wasn't enough money to pay the bill?	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
7. In the last year, how many times were you unable to pay an important monthly bill such as rent, car payment, house repair, child care, or other outstanding payment?	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
8. In the last year, how many times were you unable to afford medical care, dental care, or medicine?	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
9. In the last year, how many times did you have problems with transportation because you could not afford to buy gas for the car, pay for car repairs, or pay for the bus, cab, or other transportation?	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
	NEVER TRUE		SOMETIMES TRUE		OFTEN TRUE
10. In the last year, the food that you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more.	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
11. In the last year, you or others in your household cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food.	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
12. In the past two weeks, how often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. In the past two weeks, how often have you been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

**Section 3: Training and Professional Development**


---

1. Are you currently a member of any of the following organizations?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- ☐ National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- ☐ Arkansas Early Childhood Association (AECA)
- ☐ Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMH)
- ☐ Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)
- ☐ Other

1. What other organizations related to child care/early education are you a member of?

2. Do you have an individualized professional growth plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

3. Thinking about the curriculum you use in your classroom, how would you describe the training and support that you get for its use?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ N/A, we do not use a curriculum
- ☐ I taught myself how to use the curriculum
- ☐ I got training from the director
- ☐ I got training from the developer
- ☐ I receive ongoing coaching

4. Thinking about the training that you have had in the last 6 months, were any of the professional development activities you had, in person or online, in the following categories?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Single topic, one-session training
- ☐ In-depth, multiple-session training
- ☐ Meeting with a mentor, coach, or consultant
- ☐ Professional conferences
- ☐ College classes/coursework
- ☐ Communities of practice or practitioner study groups (a group with diverse membership organized to promote shared inquiry and learning in an effort to improve)
- ☐ Visit to other classrooms or centers (or family child care homes) to observe best practices

5. Thinking about the training that you have had in the last 6 months, were any of the professional development activities are in the following content areas?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Children's development and learning
- ☐ Children's health, safety and nutrition.
- ☐ Collaborating, communicating with, and/or supporting families.
- ☐ Learning environments, curriculum implementation, and program quality
- ☐ Teacher-child interactions, including positive classroom climate and behavior management
- ☐ Inclusion, participation, and learning for children with identified disabilities/delays
- ☐ Cultural and linguistic diversity
- ☐ Using observation and assessment to plan daily activities or child screening

---

**How prepared do you feel to work with the following age groups of children?**

---

	Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Generally prepared	Totally prepared
6. Infants and toddlers (0 months - 35 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. School-aged children (6 years and older)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How prepared do you feel to work with children who may need additional support because of:**

	Not at all prepared	Somewhat prepared	Generally prepared	Totally prepared
9. Developmental delays/disabilities or special healthcare needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Learning English as a new language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Social-emotional and/or behavior problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. In the last year, have you or your program asked a parent to pick a child up early or keep a child at home because of his or her behavior in your classroom (things like hitting, kicking, biting, tantrums, or disobeying)?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, a parent has been asked to pick up a child early on one or more days <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, a parent has been asked to keep a child at home for one full day or more <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, a parent has been asked to withdraw a child from the program permanently			
(Check all that apply)				

**Section 4: Organizational Environment**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff are friendly and trust one another.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Morale is high. There is a good team spirit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Staff are encouraged to learn new skills and competencies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The organization provides guidance for professional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Supervisor(s) are knowledgeable and competent.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Supervisor(s) provide helpful feedback.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Communication regarding policies and procedures is clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Job responsibilities are well defined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Salaries and benefits are distributed equitably.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Teachers help make decisions about things that directly affect them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Staff and families feel free to express their opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Staff share a common vision of what the center should be like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The program is well planned and efficiently run.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Meetings are productive. Time is not wasted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The work environment is attractive and well organized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. There are sufficient supplies & equipment for staff to do their jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. Staff are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. The organization implements changes as needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Clearly planned goals and objectives exist for my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I have the knowledge and skills to do my job well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I have enough resources to do my job well.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I get the support I need to do my job well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



---

**Cash prize drawing:**

**If you would like to be entered into our cash prize drawing, please enter your email address or phone number below. Afterward, just hit the "Submit" button below to finish up.**

Email

\_\_\_\_\_

Please use the following format:  
501-583-6932

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me what quality child care looks like to you?
  - a. Does your Director see “quality child care” differently than you?
2. Think back to your FIRST DAY in child care/early childhood education and about how well prepared/trained you were.
  - a. What aspects of your work were you best prepared for as you began your job?
  - b. What experiences most prepared you for your work in early childhood settings? Was it?
    1. *If stuck: Preservice education, In-service training, Personal experiences*
  - c. What aspects of your work were you least prepared for as you began your job?
    - i. What can be done to make sure new teachers are more prepared for that?
3. About their job now
  - a. What aspects of your work are you best at now (your areas of strength)?
  - b. What aspects of your work are the most challenging?
  - c. What is/are some ways to improve your knowledge and skill in those areas?
    - i. What specific training topics would you MOST like to participate in?
4. Do you see any gaps between the professional development you need and what is available to you?
5. Participatory Ranking Methodology: Make Positive List
  - a. What are some things your program or Director currently do that make you feel supported in your job? Just start calling things out, and I’ll start a list.
  - b. Is there anything they could start doing to make you feel supported that should be on the list?
6. Participatory Ranking Methodology: Make Negative List
  - a. Let’s talk for a few minutes about things that make you feel unhappy with your job. Everyone start calling things out, and I’ll make a list.

SHORT BREAK, turn lists into paper for cups

7. Participatory Ranking Methodology: Rank the Positives
  - a. Rank and place HELP ME FEEL THE MOST SUPPORTED
8. Participatory Ranking Methodology: Rank the Negatives
  - a. Rank and place MOST CHALLENGING or BURDENSOME

WIND DOWN, eyes closed, raise hands

9. Think about how you feel about your time in the child care field as a whole—What you've enjoyed about it and what's really been tough. Think about, across all your jobs in the field, how you've felt going into work in the morning and how you feel at your job now... With all this in mind, I'm going to ask how likely you are to leave the child care field entirely and move into a new field.
  - a. Please raise your hand if you are VERY UNLIKELY to leave the child care field at some point for work in a new field... (Unlikely, Not sure, Likely, Very likely)
10. Ok, keep your eyes closed: Everyone please close your eyes for a moment. If you have more than one paid job during the school year, please raise your hand.
11. Before we wrap up, is there anything I didn't ask about, or something you didn't get to say that you think is really important we know?

## Appendix 4: Preparation and Execution of Participatory Ranking Methodology Activities

### PRM Preparation:

1. Measure out a 100 inch line in masking tape on the floor. Mark one end with 0, one end with 100, and the middle with 50 to denote each distance
2. Mark tall cups or similar objects with a single piece of masking tape across the rim, from inside to outside. Use a marker to draw a vertical line on the tape. This will be used later to measure the cups' distance on the 0-100 line on the floor.
3. Cut and fold pieces of paper so part of the paper may rest on what is normally the bottom of the cup, with the longer end following the cup vertically to the floor. Do not attach the paper to the cup just yet.

### PRM Setup:

1. Ask participants a question and write their responses on a list (we used the following: “What are the most challenging or burdensome parts of your job?” and “What are some things your program directors or area directors do that make you feel supported in your job?”).
2. Once the list fills up, consolidate any similar or identical items to shorten the list, and write each of the items on one of your folded pieces of paper.
3. Attach each piece of paper to what is normally the bottom of the cup and secure with tape so that it lines up with the tape placed on the cup in step 2 of the preparation. This will allow you to see the measurement line on the back of the cup, while participants see the paper on the front of the cup.

### PRM Execution:

1. Go cup-by-cup, having the participants decide as a group how far along the 0 to 100 line each issue should be placed, with 0 being “Not Important” and 100 being “Highly/Critically Important.” Note that two or more cups are allowed to receive the same score if none of the issues listed on those cups are decided to be more or less important than the other.
2. Once each issue has been placed, review the results with participants and invite them to make any changes.
3. Record both the rank of each issue and its position on the 0 to 100 inch line.

