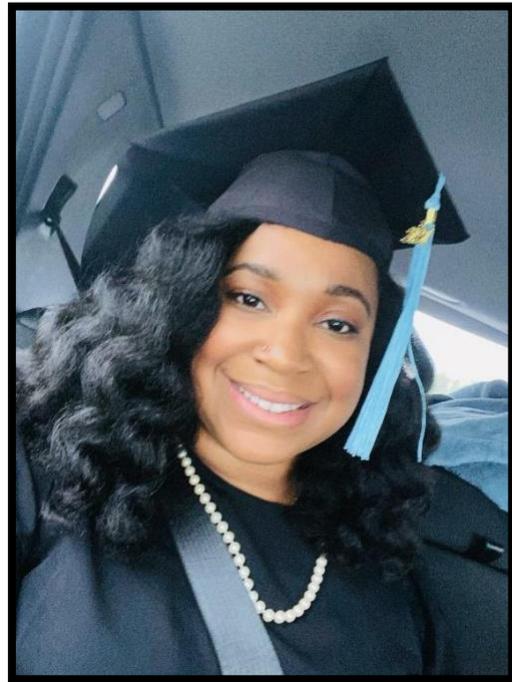




## Moving the Needle on Early Childhood Workforce Compensation



Cohort V  
October 2022

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center is a division of  
Child Care Services Association

## Quotes

**What is your perspective about the value of this project in moving the needle on early childhood workforce compensation in your state?**

*I appreciate that the project gave focus on workforce when there are so many topic areas in ECE that need attention. It really allowed a subgroup of our Coalition to continue increasing compensation in Maine's ECE workforce.*

**What is your overall impression of your team's experiences in this project?**

*I think this was a good way to convene a group from across early childhood sectors and have targeted conversations about the early childhood education workforce.*

## Acknowledgement

Special thanks to the Alliance for Early Success and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, whose generous support made this project possible; and to the leadership within organizations that hosted this project in Kentucky, Maine, Nebraska and Washington, whose time and commitment contributed to our body of knowledge toward moving the needle on early childhood compensation issues. The conclusions and views reported in this report are those of the authors and the compensation teams, and not those of the funders.

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## Quotes

**In thinking about the T.E.A.C.H. National Center’s support during this project, what was helpful for your team over the course of the past year?**

*Facilitation, education, and the creation of a dedicated space to discuss the issue that previously did not exist.*

*Having examples of other states successes and implementation of salary scales and compensation efforts.*

## Introduction

One of the most entrenched barriers to recruiting and retaining the educated workforce young children need is woefully low workforce compensation. In fact, low wages are often seen as the reason for high turnover and workforce instability. To that end, states across the country are implementing strategies to address the issue of early childhood workforce compensation. The challenge that states often face is the competition between increasing access for children in need of early care and education and building high quality programs for young children, where teachers are well educated and well compensated.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, early childhood education programs, a critical sector of American economic infrastructure, has experienced enormous strain. In fact, the pandemic, “laid bare how decades of underinvestment have weakened the sector and contributed to deep wealth and workforce inequity among families and child care professionals.”<sup>1</sup>

**The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center**, a division of Child Care Services Association, provides leadership for the early childhood education field for states across the country and for our nation’s policymakers on the critical importance and value of an educated, well-paid and stable early childhood workforce to ensure the long-term success of our nation’s children in school and life. This is reflected in the Center’s evolving 50 state strategy to support the advancement of the early childhood workforce toward equitable access to education, fair compensation and workplace retention.

<sup>1</sup>Cite: Elizabeth U. Cascio, “COVID-19, Early Care and Education, and Child Development: (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College and Cambridge MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2021), available at [https://www.nber.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/cascio\\_seanWP\\_oct2021\\_revised.pdf](https://www.nber.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/cascio_seanWP_oct2021_revised.pdf)

## About the Project

For the past seven years, the T.E.A.C.H. National Center has been using a cross-state cohort model to move the needle on early childhood workforce issues including articulation, compensation and barriers to higher education access. Through this model, we have seen many examples of the impact this approach has had on moving policy, funding and strategy development/implementation. Collectively a great deal has been learned about what it takes to make progress along with the challenges that arise in working to affect policy, strategy development and/or expansion, and funding around workforce issues in states. This past year, with funding from the Alliance for Early Success, the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Center worked with four states on Moving the Needle (MtN) on Early Childhood Workforce Compensation.

Through a Request for Application process, four states were selected based on their capacity to engage in this work. States were required to submit a landscape analysis, including a discussion of current compensation, benefits and other relevant data about the early workforce, findings from workforce studies and reports, the impact of COVID-19 on early childhood educator education, compensation and/or recruitment/retention, and a summary of the state investments in the state’s EC workforce.

To help ensure the states’ successes, the Center committed to providing a package of supports including

1. Funds for in-state efforts to support the work of the teams
2. Group technical assistance for teams via webinars, informational materials and a National Summit
3. Individual state team technical assistance via participation of project staff in state team meetings, feedback on State Action Plans and by individual request
4. Dissemination of findings with support from participating states

## What States Agreed To Do in Order to Participate

Solving big policy, funding and strategy development/ implementation challenges does not happen on its own. Outcome driven and sustained efforts over the long haul are required along with consistent engagement in the work.

Each state agrees to participate in the following ways to ensure their work progressed over the life of the project.

1. Assemble a diverse team of 8-10 members
2. Develop a Policy, Funding and Strategy Plan
3. Work as a team to implement the plan
4. Participate in Center provided technical assistance and a National ECE Workforce Issues Summit
5. Report on the work of the team
6. Disseminate findings from the project in conjunction with the Center

## Reasons States Gave for Participating

One point teams agreed on is that the workforce in general and compensation specifically, is on the forefront like never before.

- “This is a critical time and a major opportunity for the early childhood workforce.”
- “With increased investments in early learning through CCDF, CARES, and ARPA funds and with action on the American Jobs Plan and the American Family Act on the horizon the time is right to leverage the work that has already been completed and unify around a mechanism for addressing compensation.”

### Project Objective

To address early childhood educator education, compensation and/or retention/recruitment through the development of new strategies, better public policies and/or increased funding within participating states, given the current pandemic realities within these states.

### Participating State Organizations

Kentucky – Kentucky Youth Advocates

Maine – Maine Association for the Education of Young Children

Nebraska – Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

Washington – Child Care Aware® of Washington

## Goals, Accomplishments and Ways the Workforce Will Be Better Off

All four state teams made progress and identified accomplishments toward incremental change and in some ways more transformational change. These accomplishments are the result of a lot of time and effort, not a lot of money, and a focus on the problem.

Participating teams made progress and realized accomplishments based on the goals, strategies and actions outlined in their Policy, Strategy and Funding Action Plans. Of course, with accomplishments always come challenges. Not all advocacy efforts toward workforce funding resulted in wins. Collectively across the states there were observations of competing priorities and significant investments. In the end, the states unanimously agreed that it was worth the investment of time to bring a team together and work to move the needle on early childhood workforce compensation. The following pages highlight the efforts of the four state teams to move the needle on early childhood education workforce compensation.

## Kentucky Youth Advocates

**Long Term Vision:** Early childhood educators are valued as a vital part of Kentucky’s education system and economy and are compensated appropriately.

### Team Goals

**Goal 1:** Early childhood workforce compensation will be increased through funding a Child Care WAGE\$® Program (or salary supplement/wage incentive.)

**Goal 2:** Categorical child care eligibility for children of the early childhood workforce will be created.

**Goal 3:** Create a health insurance strategy to expand compensation to the early childhood workforce.

### Accomplishments

- Louisville Metro Council dedicated \$7.5 million in ARPA funds to “Provide childcare and early learning projects to address immediate COVID needs, expand access to childcare and early learning, improve quality and mitigate COVID related developmental delays.”
- Developed cost estimates for using ARPA funds to offer categorical eligibility for child care assistance for early childhood workforce.
- Published blog posts on our website:
  - Understanding the Child Care Staffing Crisis (May 20)
  - A Look at the New Early Childhood Education Task Force (July 6)
  - State of Child Care Fact Sheet (June 28)
- Categorical eligibility was adopted by the Cabinet in Fall 2022 as a way to recruit and retain teachers. With the help of the American Rescue Plan funds, Kentucky will begin awarding childcare subsidies for all employees that work in licensed and certified childcare programs regardless of the role that they play, such as teachers, kitchen staff, etc.

### Ways in Which the Workforce Will Be Better Off Because of this Work

- Increased attention and interest in wage supplements.
- Increased access to child care for early childhood workforce.
- Stronger resource and referral network.

## Maine Association for the Education of Young Children

**Long Term Vision:** The early childhood workforce is valued as a vital part of Maine's education system and economy. By 2030, establish a public funding mechanism to ensure that jobs in child care programs include benefits and competitive wages, commensurate with experience and credentials/degrees, reflecting the importance of the work.

### Team Goals

**Goal 1:** Pass LD 1652: An Act to Build a Child Care System by Recruiting and Retaining Maine's Early Childhood Educators Workforce and/or successful administrative implementation of funding going towards the early childhood education workforce.

**Goal 2:** Provide recommendations for short-term salary stipends utilizing a tiered salary program that honors education and experience.

**Goal 3:** Develop policy recommendations for implementing a salary scale for early childhood educators in Maine that is inclusive of all early childhood settings.

### Accomplishments

- Maine's Senate and House unanimously passed LD 1652 to include \$15 million annually for child care educator wages. This investment was ultimately included in a bipartisan passed budget, which the Governor signed in April 2022
- In October 2022, state funding will be utilized to continue monthly child care educator wage stipends which will be tiered according to education and experience.
- The MtN Work Group has drafted compensation tiers based on education and experience, which utilizes NAEYC's Power to the Profession and Maine Roads to Quality (QRIS) Career Lattice.

### Ways in Which the Workforce Will Be Better Off Because of this Work

- To ensure educators at the lowest tier of wage stipends do not incur a loss of income from the \$200 they currently receive in wage stipends through ARPA funds, the work group will be recommending the current \$200 monthly stipend be the minimum stipend for full time educators.
- Draft educator tiers will continue to evolve as more thought and research is put into inclusivity of family child care, administrators, and how Maine's educational pathways intersect. Greater stakeholder input will be sought as this work progresses.

## Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

**Long Term Vision:** Nebraska’s Early Childhood Professionals are well-educated, recognized as important by themselves and the community at large, and are compensated appropriately for their work. The professionals mirror the demographic diversity in their community and throughout the state, and are professionally supported in their work by individuals who understand early childhood development.

### Team Goals

**Goal 1:** Develop and distribute resources, grounded in the Unifying Framework, that lead to increased compensation of the Early Childhood Workforce.

**Goal 2:** Encourage decision makers to use financial resources in ways that will lead to higher compensation of the Early Childhood workforce.

**Goal 3:** Develop alternative pathways to certification, education, and competency documentation that would lead to higher salary compensation.

### Accomplishments

- Established formal partnership with the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Responsive Equitable Systems for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers) grant.
- Career lattice conversation has begun as part of the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. grant.
- Conversations with the Buffett Institute around salary scales and thriving wage ~ papers and recommendations reviewed.
- [Educare](#) pilot project starting with two participants will continue in 2023.

### Ways in Which the Workforce Will Be Better Off Because of this Work

- Retention bonuses from Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services, estimates between \$3.2 – 4.4 million, will be provided to the current workforce.
- Child Care WAGE\$ funding will continue for the next year from the NE Department of Education, including funding for family childcare providers.
- The Responsive Equitable Systems for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers ([R.E.S.P.E.C.T.](#)) grant will allow expanded opportunities for, and access to, higher education.
- Apprenticeship model is being discussed/developed which will lead to a new way to train, hire and retain quality staff.
- Decision on a thriving wage will give an idea of how much money is needed to support the workforce and can inform legislative action.
- A newly created career lattice will allow early childhood educators to better understand the vast array of opportunities that exist in the field, and how they are interconnected.
- Creation, distribution, and support for a Nebraska EC Salary Scale will unify the profession and provide guidance relating to appropriate wages/compensation for the workforce.

## Child Care Aware® of Washington

**Project Vision:** The WA State Team on Workforce Compensation will create a policy proposal for the 2023 legislative session to promote retention, recruitment, and sustainability of the childcare workforce through increased compensation. The State Team will also pursue mobilization, communications, and advocacy strategies for building political will in favor of advancing compensation.

### Team Goals

The Provider Design Team's overall goal is to Increase access to high-quality child care for children, families, and communities in Washington State through comprehensive legislation that recruits and retains a diverse and thriving workforce.

#### Policy Design Goals

- Center the expertise, experience, and self-determination of a representative group of child care workers in policy development.
- Reach consensus on key policy components of comprehensive workforce compensation legislation.
- Be explicit about the compromises that will be necessary for compensation legislation to advance and prioritize / sequence dials that can be turned up and turned down.
- Provide multiple platforms for non-licensed members of the child care workforce to share about their own priorities.

#### Legislative Advocacy Goals

- Launch a targeted education and outreach plan to underscore the importance of compensation for equitable economic recovery and development.
- Engage current legislative champions in workforce compensation advocacy and cultivate a deep bench of new legislative champions especially legislators of color.
- Keep legislative staff well informed and educated on issues related to workforce compensation.

#### Strategic Communications and Mobilization Goals

- Build public will for increased compensation among grassroots and grasstops leaders in target legislative districts.
- Raise the profile of workforce compensation in earned media and social media in target legislative districts with a solutions-oriented focus.
- Deepen relationships with business leaders to highlight the importance of workforce compensation for the child care industry and for economic growth.
- Engage unexpected and effective messengers to reinforce the voices of providers, such as parents, K-12 teachers, and employers.

## Accomplishments

- Providers, families, and advocates have unified around a liberatory design process to identify scalable policy solutions for stabilizing the child care workforce. With support from advocates, 34 members of the child care workforce representing diverse geographic locations, workforce roles, individual racial/ethnic/linguistic identities, and programmatic characteristics are meeting regularly to develop a comprehensive policy proposal for the 2023 legislative session.
- There is broad support from organizations across the state. The Provider Compensation Design Team is supported by: Child Care Aware of WA, Child Care Resources, Children’s Alliance, Community Day Center for Children, Early Care & Education Consortium, Economic Opportunity Institute, Imagine Institute, MomsRising, Save the Children Action Network, SEIU 925, WA State Association of Head Start & ECEAP, WA Child Care Center Association, the WA Federation of Independent Schools, and the Washington Family Child Care Association.

## Ways in Which the Workforce Will Be Better Off Because of this Work

- Workforce members voices and experiences are centered in this work and are working to agree on the most important parts of a policy proposal for increasing workforce compensation (wages and benefits) in the 2023 legislative session and help advocate for its success.

## Conclusion

As with all of the previous cohorts, these four teams plan to continue working on the intractable, but critical issue of early childhood workforce compensation in their states. Where the work resides in each state will vary. One state will absorb this work in their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program administrative home, continuing with the partners that have worked on the Moving the Needle workgroup. Others plan to incorporate this work into an existing coalition or task force. Wherever this work lands it is clear that within these four states, their efforts to address early childhood education workforce compensation will move forward.

### Quotes

*Do you have any last thoughts about this project?*

The T.E.A.C.H. National Center’s supports helped in the creation of a dedicated space to discuss the issue that previously did not exist.

I believe T.E.A.C.H. can be a galvanizing force that helps mobilize all states to work towards a nationwide initiative that compensates providers for the critical work they do at a level that enables the workforce to grow and thrive!