

# The Early Care & Education Workforce

The early care and education industry supports an estimated 5 million jobs nationwide. Of this total, 2.3 million work with children under the age of five. The provision of early care and education services by an educated workforce positively impacts child outcomes both in the short-term and over a lifetime. Providing quality services also supports the economic needs of communities across the nation – allowing parents to work, adults to attend college or training and local businesses to operate.

## Who We Are

### The early care & education workforce...

- Is working in every state in America.
- Is mostly women, most of whom are mothers.
- Is very diverse -- both in terms of the age and ethnicity.
- Follows an ethical code of conduct and uses developmentally appropriate practices.
- Adheres to standards and guidelines to inform practice.
- Works long hours in challenging environments.
- Earns low wages in comparison to other professions with like education and responsibility.
- Has few benefits and is likely to be using a form of government aid.
- Wants to attend college and is likely to be a first generation student.
- Wants to increase its earnings and have a career in the field.

## What We Do

### The early care & education workforce...

- Enters the field from multiple entry points, with varying levels of education.
- Provides services for families with children ages birth to twelve in out-of-home settings.
- Works as teachers in a diverse array of settings from corporate programs and college campus settings to school-based pre-kindergarten programs, federally funded programs (Head Start) and home-based settings.
- Also works in government agencies, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations and private companies.
- Attends college part-time, while working full time – most often, after becoming employed.
- Expects professional recognition for the education earned.

## What We Need

### The early care & education workforce needs...

- Career guidance to learn about available opportunities.
- Planning tools to guide professional development.
- Access to information to make choices about which college will work best.
- Financial assistance to provide access to the college courses, credentials and degrees to improve knowledge and skills.
- Education that leads to better compensation that supports our families and retention in the profession.
- The public to understand why early care and education work is important to children, families and society.



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