

Child Care Professionals in 2010: The view from Wisconsin





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Why this study?

About 70% of Wisconsin's youngest children age 0-5 are in some sort of child care setting. The quality of the care received has effects that go far beyond individual children and their families. Research studies continue to reveal direct relationships between quality early learning experiences and later behavior and capacities. For example, the research by Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman shows that investments in early childhood education improve children's later education, health and economic outcomes and decrease the use of future public dollars for special education, grade retention, and welfare. During the course of their lives, children who experience quality early-learning programs will likely be healthier, more self-sufficient and less likely to enter the criminal justice system. That adds up to as much as a \$17 economic return for every \$1 invested.

Because the impacts of quality early childhood learning are so profound, it is essential to understand the workforce that provides child care in Wisconsin. In this study, demographics “at a glance” are provided as well as in-depth information on the education, compensation, work experience, satisfaction and professional development levels of the child care workforce.

How to use this information

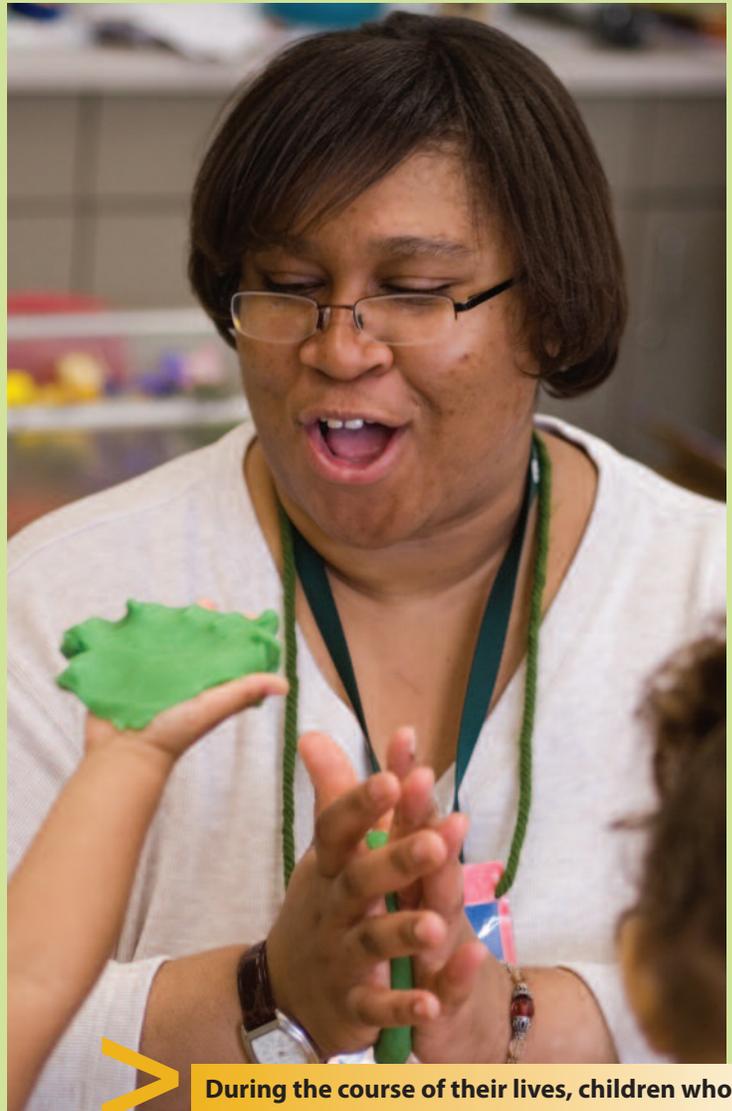
Use the table of contents to locate information of interest. The material is current as of 2010. For this reason, it should be very helpful when researching and advocating for policies that support quality early learning experiences for all children in Wisconsin.

Study background

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) completed a child care workforce study in 2010 to help create an accurate picture of the strengths and challenges in the field today. WECA teamed together with the Public Policy Forum to gather a group of early education stakeholders to determine what information we wanted to gather from the workforce. Target information was grouped into categories including education, experience, job satisfaction, and compensation. We used the same categories of questions to gather information from all survey recipients, but altered individual questions to create three distinct surveys specific to group child care directors, group child care employees, and family child care providers.

Previous Wisconsin child care workforce studies were completed in 1980, 1988, 1994, 2001, and 2005. Unfortunately, these past surveys each used different methodologies to examine the field. For example, some studies asked directors to report on data about their employees, whereas other asked the same questions to the employees directly. There

were also changes within the field that changed the way data was collected over time. These changes and differences in methodologies make it difficult to make comparisons about the workforce over time. Additionally, it becomes problematic to use previously collected data to understand trends in the current child care workforce.



During the course of their lives, children who experience quality early-learning programs will likely be healthier, more self-sufficient and less likely to enter the criminal justice system. That adds up to as much as a \$17 economic return for every \$1 invested.

Survey Methodology and Response Rate

In March 2010, the Public Policy Forum and WECA mailed the surveys to 7,191 child care center directors, child care center employees, and family child care providers across the state of Wisconsin. Survey recipients were also given the option of completing the survey online. A total of 1,425 surveys were completed and analyzed for an overall response rate of 19.8%. Additionally, of the 2,428 regulated group centers in Wisconsin, at least one survey was returned from 748, or 31%, of these centers (see **Table A**).

Data sets were used from the Department of Children and Families' statewide database which included licensed and certified programs, as well as full- and part-day centers. Surveys were sent to all 2,481 child care directors in the database and six were returned as undeliverable. Center directors had the highest return rate of all three subgroups, with 610 of 2,481 (25% response rate) completed. A random selection of 2,700 certified and licensed family child care providers was derived from the 5,466 regulated family child care programs in the database. Of the 2,700 surveys sent to family child care providers, 24 were returned as undeliverable and 560 were completed, for a response rate of 21%.

As Wisconsin does not yet have a comprehensive list of child care center employees, there is no way to know how large this total population is. Hopefully, with the passing of YoungStar and its tie-in to the Registry, a list of this nature will soon be available. In the meantime, in order to collect data from child care employees, a random selection of 670 group child care centers each received three employee surveys to distribute indiscriminately to three of

Group Child Care Program Geographic Distribution

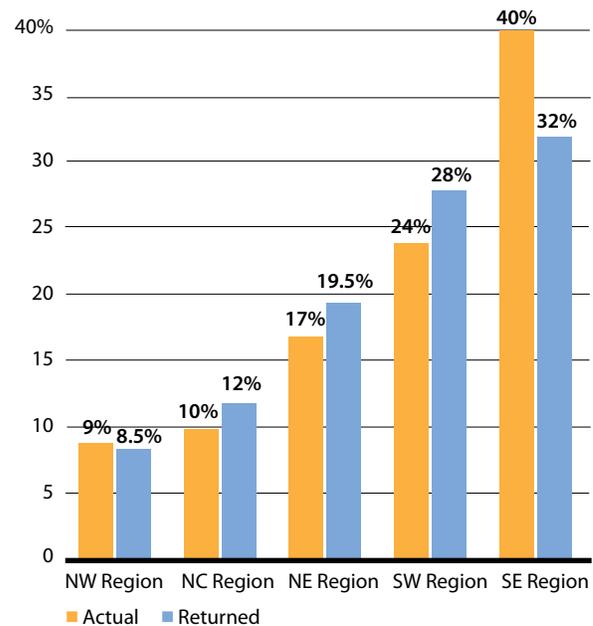


Figure 1: Actual geographic distribution of group child care programs vs. distribution of group child care survey respondents

	Population Size	Survey Sample Size	Undeliverable	Returned Surveys	Response Rate
Regulated Group Center Directors	2,481	2,481	6	610	25%
Regulated Group Center Employees	Approximately 28,650 from 2,428 centers	3 surveys sent to 670 random centers for 2,010 total	12	255	13%
Regulated Family Child Care Providers	5,466	Random sample of 2,700	24	560	21%
Total Group Centers	2,428	2,428	6	At least one from 748 centers	31%
Overall	Estimated 36,597	7,191	42	1,425	20%

Table A: Response rates from the 2010 workforce study

their employees. Thus, 2,010 center employees received surveys and 12 were returned as undeliverable. A total of 252 were completed, for a response rate of 13%- the lowest of all three subgroups.

All random sample populations that were selected were representative of the entire statewide child care database with regard to geographic distribution by region. The responses received were also similarly representative of this geography (see **Figures 1-3**). At least one survey was returned from every county in Wisconsin except for Florence, Forest, and Menominee counties. The largest number of surveys was received from Milwaukee County (16% of the total return), Dane County (9% of the total return), Waukesha and Outagamie Counties (each had 5% of the total return), and Rock County (4% of the total return).

With a lower response rate than previous studies, it was critical to determine if the results could be viewed as representative of the entire Wisconsin workforce. When determining how well this sample represents the entire population, the margins of error- calculated at a 95% confidence interval- are as follows: Center directors had a +/-3.45% margin of error, center employees had a +/-7.95% margin of error, and family child care providers had a +/-3.92% margin of error. Thus, for results gathered by center directors, if the survey was completed 100 more times, the same conclusions (within 3.45% of this study's results) would be reached in 95 out of the 100 trials. The center employee survey reliability figure was difficult to calculate because the exact number of center employees in the state is unknown. However, it was possible to calculate the +/- 7.95 percentage point margin of error by noting that returned surveys represent employees from 143 of the state's 2,248 group child care programs.

Because all mail surveys are vulnerable to non-response bias, it is possible that child care providers who chose to respond to the survey differ in significant ways from those that did not respond. For example, it is possible that child care professionals who did not respond did so because they believed

that their responses would be seen as less positive (lower education, less satisfaction, less experience) than others in the field. As with all mail survey summaries, it is important to keep this potential non-response bias in mind when reviewing the following results.

Licensed Family Child Care Program Geographic Distribution

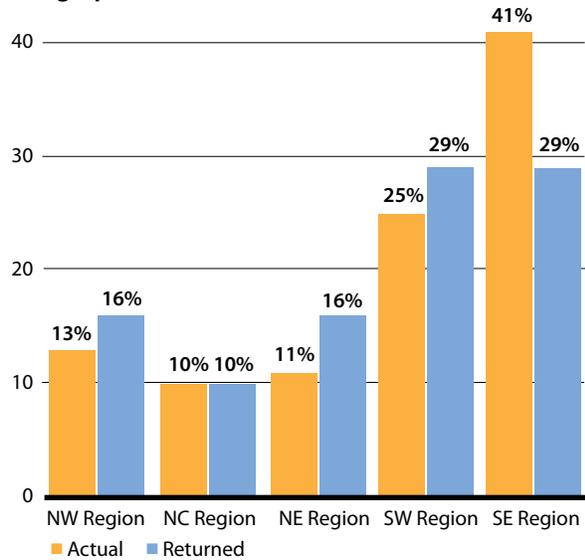


Figure 2: Actual geographic distribution of licensed family providers vs. distribution of licensed family survey respondents

Certified Family Child Care Program Geographic Distribution

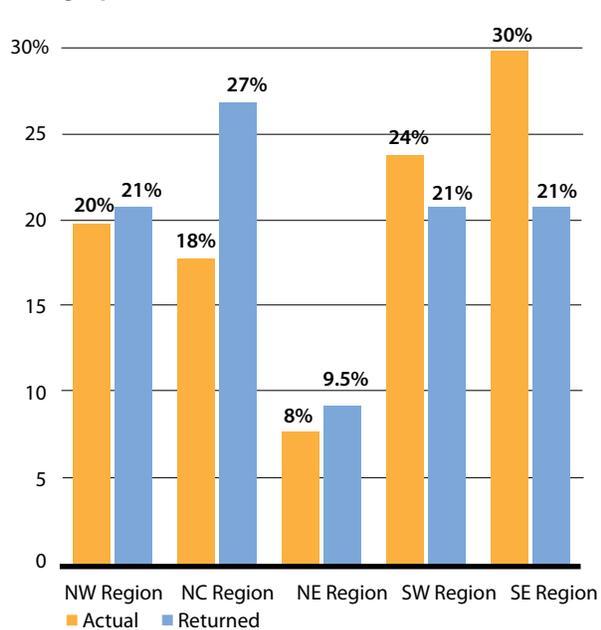


Figure 3: Actual geographic distribution of certified family providers vs. distribution of certified family survey respondents

The Workforce at a Glance

Based on the results of the study, there were approximately 36,597 individuals in the 2010 Wisconsin child care workforce. This estimate includes 2,481 child care directors, approximately 28,650 group child care employees, and 5,466 certified and licensed family child care providers. The estimate of group child care employees was calculated by multiplying the average number of employees working at the surveyed centers (11.8 employees, in addition to a director, per center) by the total number of regulated group centers at the time of the survey (2,428 centers).

Results from the workforce study suggest that Wisconsin's child care professionals:

- are primarily female. Only 1.5% of respondents who answered this question were male.
- are likely to be over the age of 36. The most popular age range, with 56% of responses, was 36-55 years old. Center directors were, on average, the oldest of the three subgroups with 78% over the age of 36. Family child care providers were next with 74%, and 62% of group child care employees were age 36 or older. **Figure 4** shows the complete age breakdown of the workforce.

Number of Dependent Children

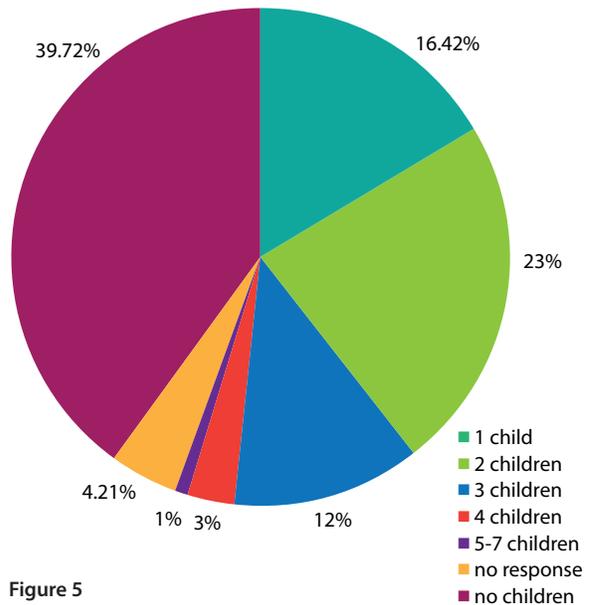


Figure 5

- are likely to have several years of experience. Survey respondents had an average of 14.5 years of experience in the field. Center directors averaged 16 years, family child care providers averaged 13.8 years, and group center employees averaged 12.5 years.
- are likely to have their own dependent children to care for. 59% of respondents were parents/guardians of at least one dependent child at home, with 2 children being the average (see **Figure 5**). Most (94%) do not receive financial support for these children through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program.
- are likely to have someone else contribute to their household incomes. 72% of respondents reported that other(s) contributed to their total household income.
- are likely to see themselves staying in the field. 88% of respondents said that they see themselves in the field three years from now. 55% could see themselves in the field in 10 years.
- are likely to only be employed as a child care professional. Only 16% of respondents were employed somewhere in addition to their child care program. 69% of those with a second employer

Age of Respondents

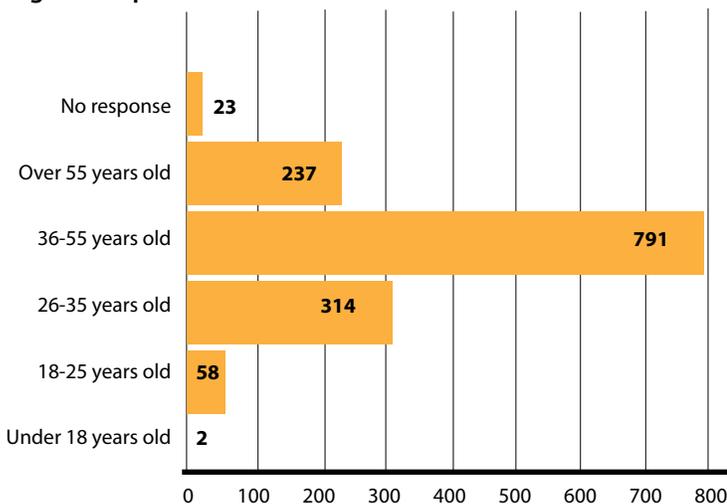


Figure 4: Age breakdown of Wisconsin child care professionals

stated that this other employment was in the early education field.

- are most likely to work with preschool age children (36 months-4 years old). 74% of respondents worked directly with preschoolers, 60% worked with toddlers (24-26 months), 60% worked with 4-year olds, 58% worked with infants (0-24 months), 43% worked with 5-year olds, 48% worked with school-age children, and 16% performed administrative work only.
- are generally supportive of a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) in the state. 35% of respondents noted that a QRIS would encourage them to assist their program in meeting high-quality standards and 19% said that it would encourage them to pursue credit-based training in early education. 8% would be encouraged to pursue a 2-year degree, 6% would be encouraged to pursue a 4-year degree, and 16% would likely apply for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Only 9% of respondents noted that a QRIS would encourage them to leave the field.

Group Child Care Programs

Of those group child care programs who returned a survey, 156 reported being part of a multi-site program, 565 reported that they were licensed, and 1 reported to be license exempt. Most (64%) programs reported that they offer group child care at their site and 59% of programs reported that

Type of Group Child Care Site (n=610)	Response—number of programs
For profit	202
Non-profit	307
Affiliated with a religious organization	105
Affiliated with a public elementary school	27
Affiliated with a private elementary school	14
Employer- or campus-based child care	28
No response	93

Table B

they offered a preschool program. Almost half (49%) of the group child care directors who returned a survey reported that their site offered a before and/or after school program, 20% said that they offered a 4K program, and 8% said that they offered a Head Start or Early Head Start program. **Table B** shows the range of group facilities from which survey responses were received.

With respect to accreditation, 67 programs reported that they were accredited, and an additional 71 programs reported that they were currently working towards accreditation. For those programs who were not accredited or working towards accreditation (n=472), directors were asked why they chose not to go through an accreditation process. The most frequently cited reasons included: too costly, not seeing any benefit/not necessary, and not desired by staff (see **Table C**).

Group child care program respondents reported employing 7,269.5 full-time employees, for an average of 12.8 employees per center. The most common job title for these employees was teacher, followed by assistant teacher, director, and non-teaching staff.

A little under half of group program respondents (41%) reported that they would, or currently did, offer financial support to their employees

If currently not accredited, or considering accreditation, why not?	Group center responses (n=472)	Family child care responses (n=493)
Too costly	327	200
Don't see any benefits/not necessary	197	235
Not desired by staff	96	20
Not desired by parents	80	81
Would not meet accreditation standards	75	13
Don't know what it is/how to do it	11	16
Too timely	20	22
Other	64	63
No response	159	159

Table C: Reasons why programs are not accredited or considering accreditation



Wisconsin's child care professionals are primarily female, likely to be over age 36, have several years of experience, and see themselves staying in the field.

- 1399 children with disabilities at their programs
- 64% of programs reported caring for a total of 7070 children whose parents/guardians receive tuition subsidies through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program
- 35% of programs reported caring for a total of 1406 children whose primary language is not English
- 59% of programs reported declining enrollment due to the recession, whereas only 7% reported increased enrollment
- Lost revenue from declining enrollment has caused 51% of programs to delay buying needed equipment or materials for their program. 28% of programs have had to raise their rates and 43% of providers have had to freeze or reduce wages.

through T.E.A.C.H. scholarship support. At the time of the survey, a total of 258 T.E.A.C.H. scholars were being supported by these group centers.

Enrollment and fees: Group child care programs reported caring for a total of 36,798 children, for an average of 60 children enrolled per program.

Table D shows a breakdown of these children by age. In addition, group child care programs reported the following about their enrollment:

- 56% of programs reported caring for a total of

Group child care programs reported a wide range of tuition costs for children in their care. The average cost per week for infants was \$203, the cost for toddlers was \$184 per week, and the cost for preschoolers was \$155 per week (see **Table E**). Providers reported that some parents are not current with paying their tuition fees. A total of 63% of programs reported having at least one family behind in paying fees.

Group child care respondents generally supported the idea of a quality rating and improvement system in Wisconsin and 46% noted that providing funding or grants to assist child care

	% of group programs currently serving this age group	Total # of children enrolled in group settings	% of family programs currently serving this age group	Total # of children enrolled in family settings
Infants (0-24 mnths)	60%	4,968	66%	691
Toddlers (24-30 mnths)	60%	2,750	49%	455
Toddlers (30-36 mnths)	60%	2,964	41%	367
Preschoolers (36 mnths-4 years)	85%	10,667	59%	762
Junior Kindergarten (4-5 year)	68%	6,821	45%	450
Kindergarten (5-6 years)	44%	2,123	29%	248
School Age (6 years and up)	52%	6,505	46%	661

Table D: Enrollment by age

	Group child care programs	Family child care programs
Infants	Average: \$203 Median: \$200 Range: \$31.25-\$595	Average: \$155 Median: \$150 Range: \$25-\$350
Toddlers	Average: \$184 Median: \$178 Range: \$10-\$595	Average: \$145 Median: \$135 Range: \$25-\$325
Preschoolers	Average: \$155 Median: \$155 Range: \$10-\$445	Average: \$140 Median: \$133.50 Range: \$25-\$325

Table E: Weekly tuition costs

providers with quality improvement should be the most important goal of the system. Further, 32% agreed that reducing the number of low-quality providers in the state should be the most important goal of a QRIS.

Family Child Care Programs

Of those family child care providers who returned a survey, 370 were licensed, 170 were certified, 10 were provisionally certified, and 0 reported operating without a certification or license. Additionally, 24 programs reported that they were accredited, although 4 of these programs reported that they were accredited by organizations or groups that do not provide accreditation. An additional 43 programs reported that they were currently working towards accreditation, with 8 of these respondents reporting that they were working towards accreditation with an organization or group that does not do accreditation. Of those programs who were not accredited or working towards accreditation (n=493), providers were asked why they chose not to go through an accreditation process. The most frequently cited reasons included: not seeing any benefit/not necessary, too costly, and not desired by parents (see **Table C**).

Most family child care providers care for children without additional staffing. Only 7% of family child care providers reported that they had 1 or more full-time staff members that they employed.

Although family child care providers reported working an average of 50 hours per week with children, only 36% of respondents reported that they paid themselves a salary.

Enrollment and fees: Family child care respondents reported caring for a total of 3,634 children, for an average of 6-7 children enrolled per program. **Table D** shows a breakdown of these children by age. In addition, family child care providers reported the following about their enrollment:

- 18% of programs reported caring for a total of 148 children with disabilities at their programs
- 39% of programs reported caring for a total of 819 children whose parents/guardians receive tuition subsidies through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program
- 5% of programs reported caring for a total of 108 children whose primary language is not English
- 46% of programs reported declining enrollment due to the recession, whereas only 3% reported increased enrollment
- Lost revenue from declining enrollment has caused 46% of programs to delay buying needed equipment or materials for their program. 10% of programs have had to raise their rates and 8% of providers have had to freeze or reduce their own wages.

Family child care providers reported that on average, they receive revenue of \$462 per week from parent fees and/or Shares subsidy reimbursements. The median weekly revenue was \$380 per week with a range of \$0-\$5000. Family child care programs also reported a wide range of tuition costs for children in their care. The average cost per week for infants was \$155, cost for toddlers was \$145 per week, and cost for preschoolers was \$140 per week (see **Table E**). Providers reported that overall, most parents are current with paying their tuition fees. Only 18% of providers reported that some enrolled families were behind in paying their fees.

Education

Multiple research studies done on the quality of early care and education have found that the education of early childhood education professionals is one of the most important aspects of a high-quality programⁱ. In general, well-educated teachers are associated with greater cognitive and social gains in children, more responsive and active learning environments, and developmentally appropriate curriculaⁱⁱ. Moreover, those early childhood teachers with two- or four-year degrees in early education offer significantly higher quality learning environments to young children, with a strong emphasis on responsive interactionsⁱⁱⁱ.

According to the results of the study, almost all (98.2%) Wisconsin child care professionals have earned their high school diploma and many have already completed credits towards two- or four-year degrees (see **Table F**). Not surprisingly, center directors had the highest level of education, followed by center employees, and family child care providers. The majority of center directors (67%) have a two-year associate's degree or higher, and 47% have a four-year bachelor's degree or higher. Of the center

employees, 56% have obtained an associate's degree or higher, while 37% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Finally, 34% of family child care providers have an associate's degree or higher, but only 16% have completed a bachelor's degree or higher (see **Figure 6**). Overall, only about half of our respondents had earned either a two- or four-year degree or higher. Only one-third had completed a four-year degree or higher.

Notably these levels of education are higher than those indicated in previous workforce studies. A 2009 analysis by the Wisconsin Technical College System supports this trend, reporting that there has been a significant increase in early childhood education college enrollment over the past ten years (see **Figure 7**). College enrollment in early education programs across the technical colleges began spiking shortly after the inception of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] Wisconsin scholarship program began in 1999.

Of those respondents who had earned a degree in the field, 28% reported possessing a major in Early Childhood Education. An additional 14% of respondents reported that their major was in child care, child care services, or child development. Another 18% of respondents reported a major in Ele-

	Center Director (n=629)	Center Employee (n=235)	Family Child Care Provider (n=560)	All respondents (n=1425)
Some tech/community college	133	61	202	396
Some 4-yr college	42	20	41	50
2-year Associates Degree	101	35	85	221
AA plus some 4-year college	25	8	17	103
Bachelors Degree	202	62	64	328
Some graduate school	46	17	14	77
Masters Degree	48	9	12	69
Doctorate Degree	2	0	0	2
Other	5	3	8	16
No Response	25	20	118	163

Table F: Highest level of education completed

Highest level of education

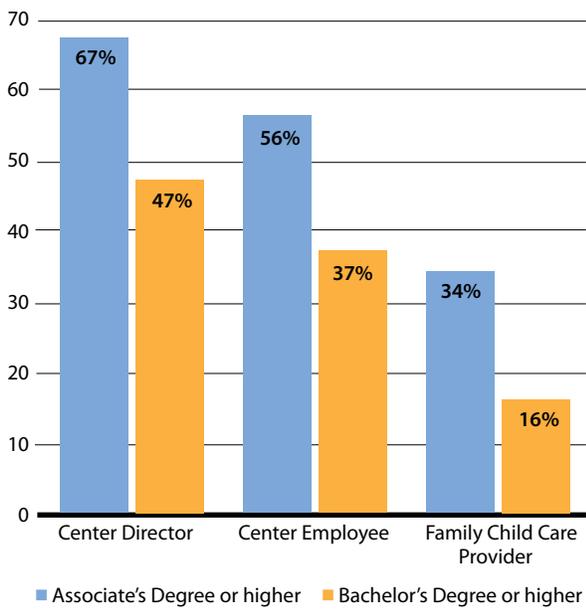


Figure 6

mentary Education, Elementary Education with ECE, or Special Education. A total of 163 respondents (or 11%), reported that they currently hold a teachers license from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Another 18% of respondents reported majors unrelated to early education, education, or administrative/business practices.

In addition to earning degrees, child care providers in Wisconsin have the option of advancing their education by earning specialized credentials in early education. Several credit-based credentials are awarded by The Registry and include the Infant-Toddler Credential, the Leadership Credential, the Preschool Credential, the Administrator Credential, and the Inclusion Credential. The survey asked the workforce to report any credentials they had earned, and respondents were allowed to report earning more than one if applicable. The most commonly earned credentials were the Infant-Toddler

Early Childhood Education Enrollment

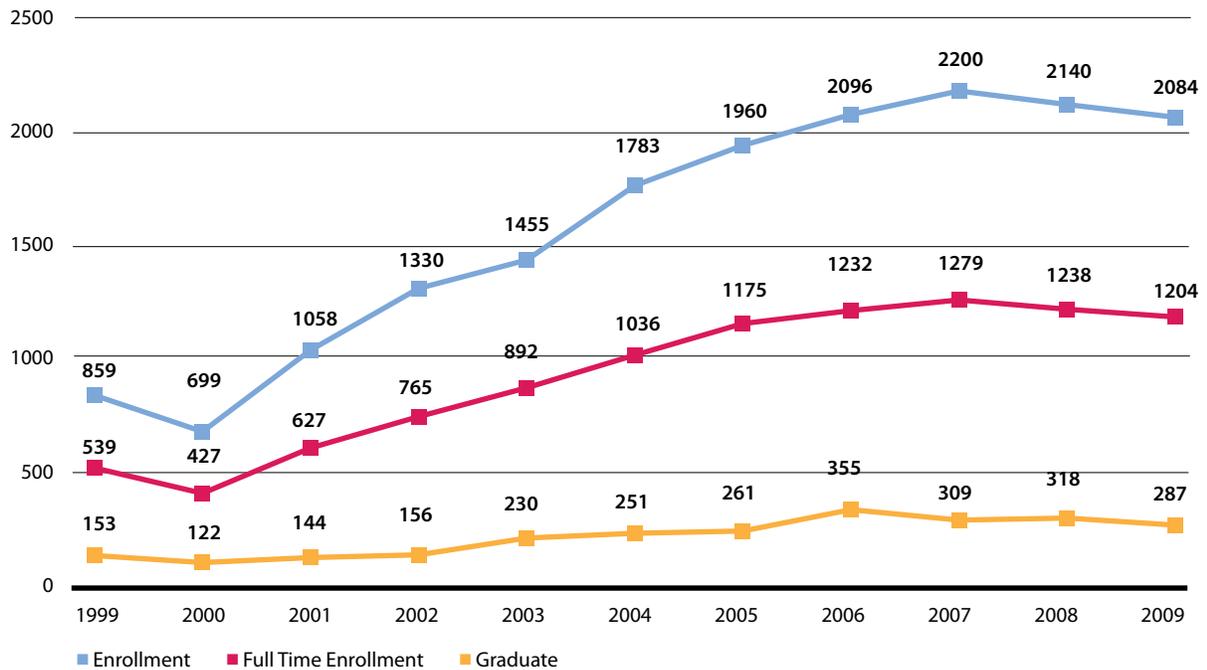


Figure 7: 2009 trend data from the WI Technical College System

Registry Credentials Earned

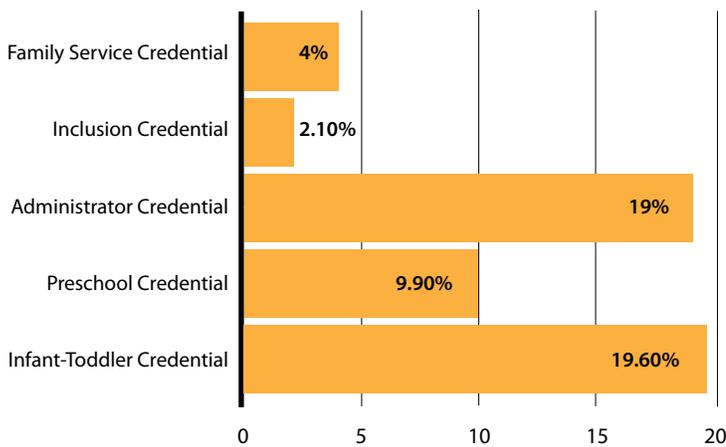


Figure 8

Credential, with 19.6% of respondents having earned it, and the Administrator Credential, with 19% of respondents having earned it (see **Figure 8**). Many child care providers have also earned non-credit specializations offered through entities like the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the CARE Courses School. Specifically, 25% of respondents have earned the DCF infant-toddler cer-

tificate, 13% have earned the DCF school-age certificate, 13% have earned the DCF administrator certificate, and 8% have earned a Child Development Associate (CDA). Providers have also earned family service credentials (4%), school age credentials (4%), and Montessori certificates (1%).

The Registry: Since its inception in 1991, The Registry has been acknowledging and collecting credit-based and non-credit based qualifications of providers from across the state. Providers who participate in The Registry are awarded certificates verifying that they meet entry level and continuing education requirements (as defined by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families) and documenting what specific training and education they have completed. Based on this information, providers are assigned a level of The Registry's career ladder. A provider with higher levels of education will be assigned a higher Registry level. Employees from over 1,800 Wisconsin child care centers are currently participating in or have (in the last 5 years) participated in The Registry.

Registry Level Comparison

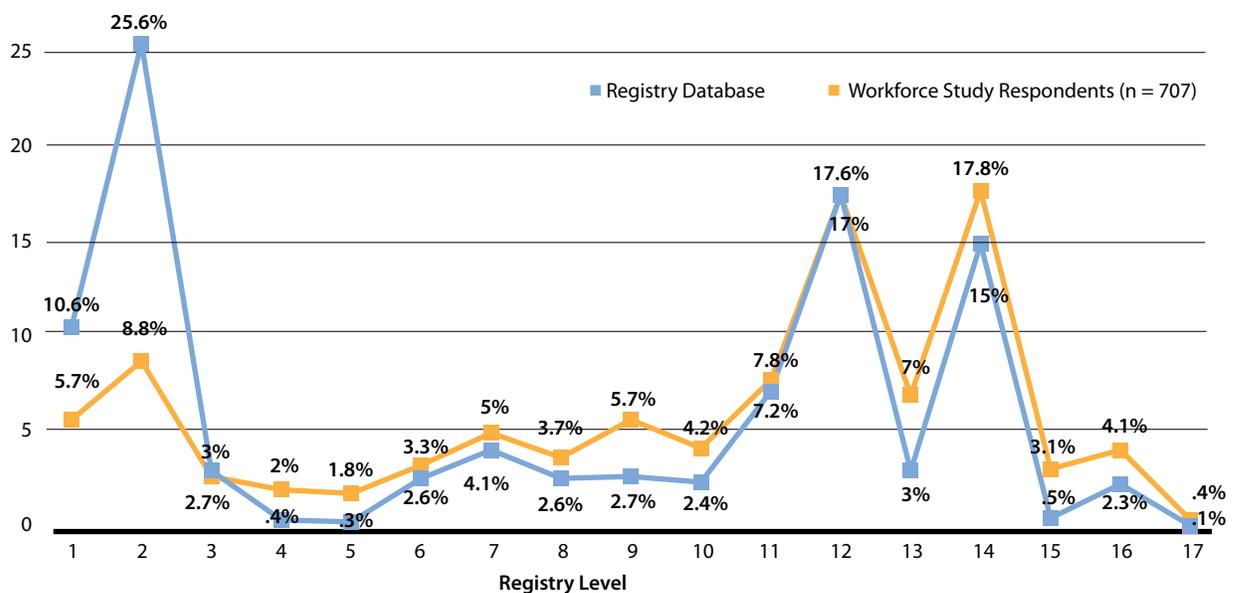


Figure 9: Comparison of all 2010 Registry members with survey respondents. At level 2, a provider has a verified high school diploma. At levels 3-7, a provider has completed non-credit based education. At levels 7-11, a provider has completed credit-based education, but has not yet completed a degree. At levels 12-17, a provider has completed an ECE related degree or its equivalent. For a complete breakdown of Registry Levels, visit www.the-registry.org

Approximately 63% of survey respondents reported that they are current members of the Registry, and 28% of those who are not current members reported being a member in the past. Additionally, a little over half (51%) of directors reported that they had a current Registry profile for their program. The survey also asked respondents who are current members of the Registry to report on their current Registry level. Around 61% reported having a Registry level between 10 and 17, whereas 39% reported a level between 1 and 9. **Figure 9** shows a complete distribution of reported Registry levels from survey respondents in comparison with the distribution of all current, active Registry members.

Link to Credit for Prior Learning: It is encouraging to see the increasing levels of higher education found across the child care workforce, but there is still room to improve. The recently implemented quality rating and improvement system in Wisconsin, YoungStar, awards more than a third of the possible points a program can earn based on the educational qualifications of staff. Because of these requirements, there will likely be an increased demand from the child care field for credit-based education, particularly from providers wanting to obtain an associate's degree or credential in early education.

Child care providers often have difficulty accessing higher education because of increasing costs and the lack of a clear point of entry into the system. In the past 10 years, the cost of bachelor degree programs has risen by approximately 84% and the cost of associate degree tuition has risen by approximately 63%. Early childhood teachers, who are often non-traditional students, can find it difficult to navigate the higher education system.

However, many child care providers have already accumulated several years of relevant experience and many hours of non-credit-based training. According to 2010 records from The Registry, Wisconsin's center-based providers have completed an average of 164 hours of non-credit training, with 123



Having the option of receiving credit for prior learning may help providers begin the higher education process and may acknowledge that their past learning is important and relevant.

of these hours coming from PDAS^{iv} tiered trainings. The average licensed family child care provider has completed 190 hours of non-credit based training, with 145 of these hours from PDAS tiered trainings. Comments from the workforce study reveal that providers believe that this experiential learning is just as valuable as credit-based learning and should be recognized in a more formal way. By creating a statewide system of credit for prior learning in the Wisconsin Technical College System, college credit (and partial fulfillment of the requirements for an associate's degree) could, in some cases, be awarded based on experiential learning (see our *Pathways to Early Childhood Higher Education: Credit for Prior Learning* brief^v for more information). Having the option of receiving credit for prior learning may help providers begin the higher education process and may acknowledge that their past learning is important and relevant.

Compensation

The child care field is often associated with low wages and few benefits. Not surprisingly, early care and education has been found to be one of the lowest paying professions in the United States^{vi}. Because of factors like low compensation, highly-qualified providers- although immensely beneficial to young children and their families- are increasingly difficult to attract, support, and retain within the child care field.

According to the study, current median wages in the field are: \$13.85 per hour for center directors, \$11.35 for group child care teachers, and \$8.10 for family child care providers. When evaluating past workforce studies^{vii}, it appears that wages, when adjusted for inflation, continue to rise slowly for group child care teachers (see **Figure 10**). **Figures 11 and 12** show the average annual salaries over time for center directors and family child care providers, also adjusted for inflation. Wages for center directors have decreased by 7.6% from the 2001 level, while wages for family child care providers have increased by 5.5% since then. While looking at the family child care provider wage table, keep in

mind that 64% of family child care providers indicated that they do NOT pay themselves a salary. Thus, the \$24,103 salary is an average only of the 34% of providers who pay themselves a salary on top of business expenditures.

While the increases in wages for some positions are encouraging, there is still a long way to go before the child care workforce achieves economic justice.

- These increases don't match the increase in professional demands that have been placed on this workforce (e.g. individual child assessments and adherence to model early learning standards).
- Wages are not comparable with professionals in public education, even when professional qualifications and job responsibilities are similar.
- Current wages may support self-sufficiency, but they are not sufficient for raising children without support from another wage-earner.
- And perhaps most significantly, all programs (no matter how high in quality) are limited in their ability to increase compensation for their staff because parents have difficulty being able to afford higher costs of care.

Median Hourly Wages for Group Child Care Employees

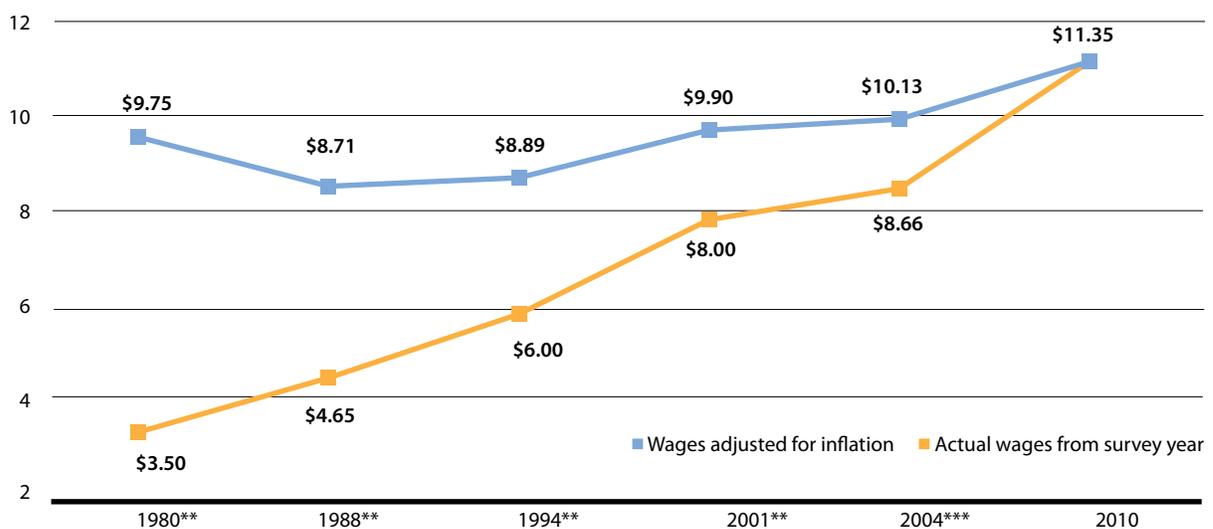


Figure 10: Inflation was calculated by using the BLS CPI-U change for Jan of the survey year through Jan 2010.

** From Adams, D. et al. (November 2003) *** From Roach, M.A., Adams, D.B., Riley, D.A., Edie, D. and Kim Y. (2005) WI Child Care Research Partnership Issue Brief #16: What do we know about the workforce in child care centers? Madison, WI: UW-Extension

Average Annual Wages for Group Child Care Center Directors

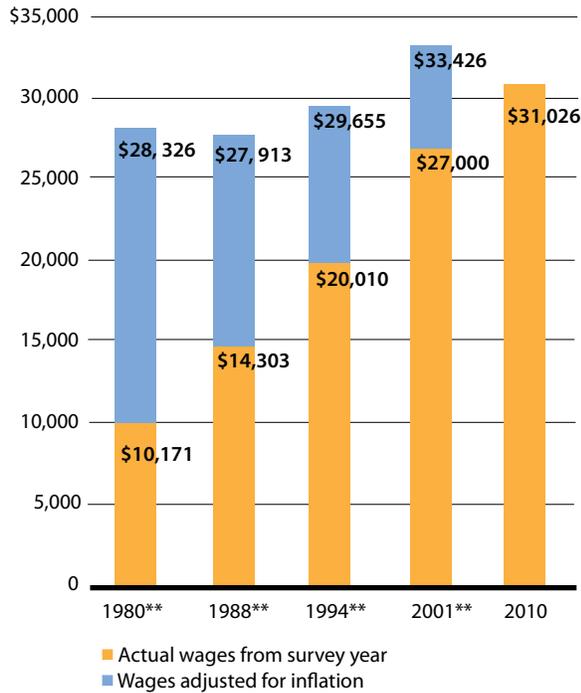


Figure 11

** From Adams, D. et al. (November 2003)

Average Annual Net Income for Family Child Care Providers

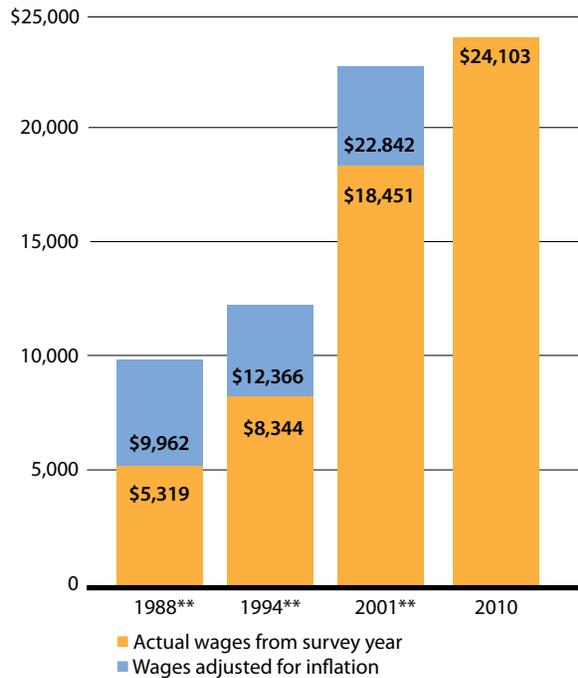


Figure 12

** From Adams, D. et al. (November 2003)

Child care wages are not comparable with other, publically-funded early education professionals, even when professional qualifications and job responsibilities are similar. The annual salary of a child care teacher at \$23,608 per year is much lower than wages for Head Start teachers, early special education teachers, and Kindergarten teachers. According to 2009 figures from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Head Start teachers earned an average annual salary of \$29,476, early special education teachers earned \$50,460, and Kindergarten teachers earned \$45,590 (see **Figure 13**). With such disparities in compensation, it is not surprising that the child care field lags behind other early education sectors in terms of educational qualifications as well. Because 61% of all Wisconsin children in early education settings are in regulated child care settings (group and family child care programs)^{viii}, this inequality in compensation and qualifications impacts the majority of our state's young children.

Early Education Sector Annual Salaries

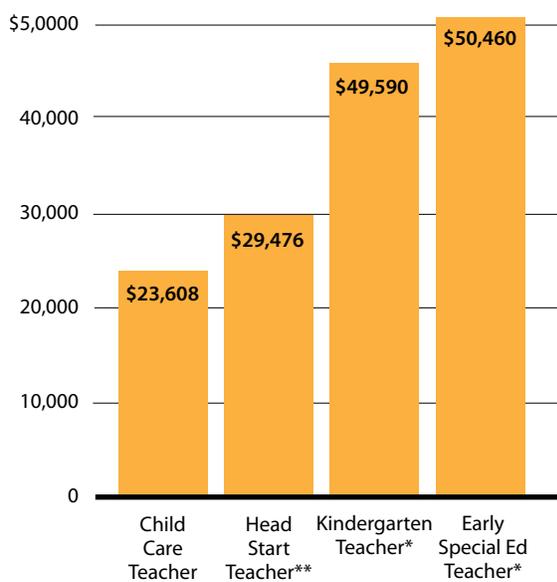


Figure 13

*US Bureau of Labor Statistics, WI wage data, May 2009.

** NIEER 2009, State of Preschool yearbook.

	Center Director (what they provide to employees) (n=610)	Center Directors and Employees (what they receive) (n=865)	Family Child Care Provider s (n=560)
Health insurance w/employer contribution	38.5%	33.3%	2%
Health insurance w/o employer contribution	3.8%	2.2%	4%
Dental insurance	35%	29%	<2%
Vision insurance	22%	18.5%	<2%
Life insurance, pension	28%	28%	4%
401 (k)	21%	20%	<1%
Other retirement benefit	11%	9%	<2%
Disability insurance	22%	21%	<2%
Paid vacation	72%	75%	25%
Paid sick days	64%	65%	17%
Paid holidays	69%	44%	8%
Paid lunch break	25%	26%	2%
Paid time off for professional development	31%	34%	7%
Paid fees/tuition for professional development	57%	51%	5.5%
Paid release time for planning	35%	18%	1%
Job protected family leave	31%	29%	1%
Free/discounted child care	60%	44%	8%

Table G: Reported benefits received by respondents

In addition to low wages, many early education professionals have few or no benefits associated with their position. Only 35% of group center employees (including directors) and 6% of family child care providers reported having health care as a benefit. Only 39% of center directors noted that they offer health insurance as an option for their employees. A little over a quarter (29%) of group center employees received dental insurance and some type of retirement plan as a benefit. In comparison, only 2-3% of family child care providers offer themselves these same benefits. The three most common benefits for both family and group programs were paid vacation, paid holidays, and paid sick days. Family child care providers were still much less likely to receive even these benefits (see **Table G** for a complete listing of reported benefits).

Experience and Job Satisfaction

Results from the workforce study suggest that Wisconsin’s child care professionals are likely to have several years of experience in the early education field. Overall, providers had an average of 14.5 years of experience in the field, with a median of 13 years. Center directors had the most experience with an average of 16 years in the field, and a median of 15 years. Family child care employees averaged 13.8 years field (median of 15 years) and child care employees averaged 12.5 years (median of 11 years). Many child care providers have also been employed at their current child care program for several years. Almost 40% of respondents who reported their start date began working at their current center or family child care program prior to the year 2000 (see **Figure 14**).

Results from the workforce study also suggest that Wisconsin's child care professionals are satisfied with their current position and are likely to see themselves staying in the field. Of those that responded to the question "how satisfied are you with your current position with this employer or as a family child care provider," 65.4% said that they are very satisfied, 30.6% said that they are somewhat satisfied, 3.7% said that they are somewhat dissatisfied, and a mere 0.3% said that they are not at all satisfied. Programs were also asked to indicate what one thing about their current employment they were most satisfied with (see **Figure 15**). The three most popular choices were "the quality of care I can provide," "interactions with children," and "job duties."

With such a high level of satisfaction among early education professionals, it is not surprising that 88% of respondents said that they see themselves in the field three years from now. 55% could see themselves in the field in 10 years. Only 21% of respondents indicated that the recession was a factor in helping them decide to stay in the field longer than they otherwise would have.

Of those respondents who indicated that they did not see themselves staying in the field, 84% al-

Began working at current place of employment

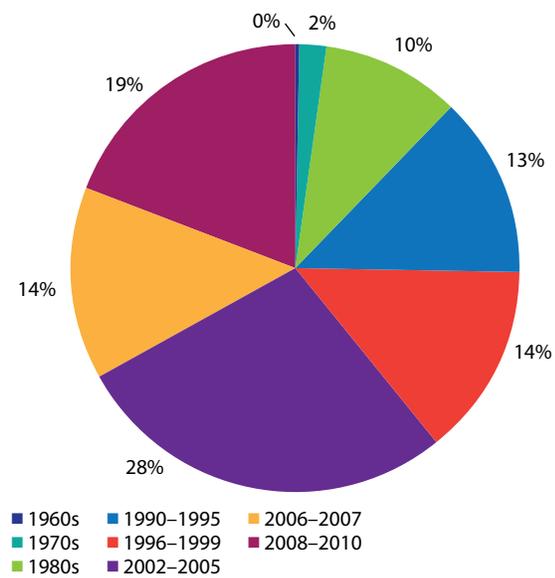


Figure 14

The things I like most about my job.....

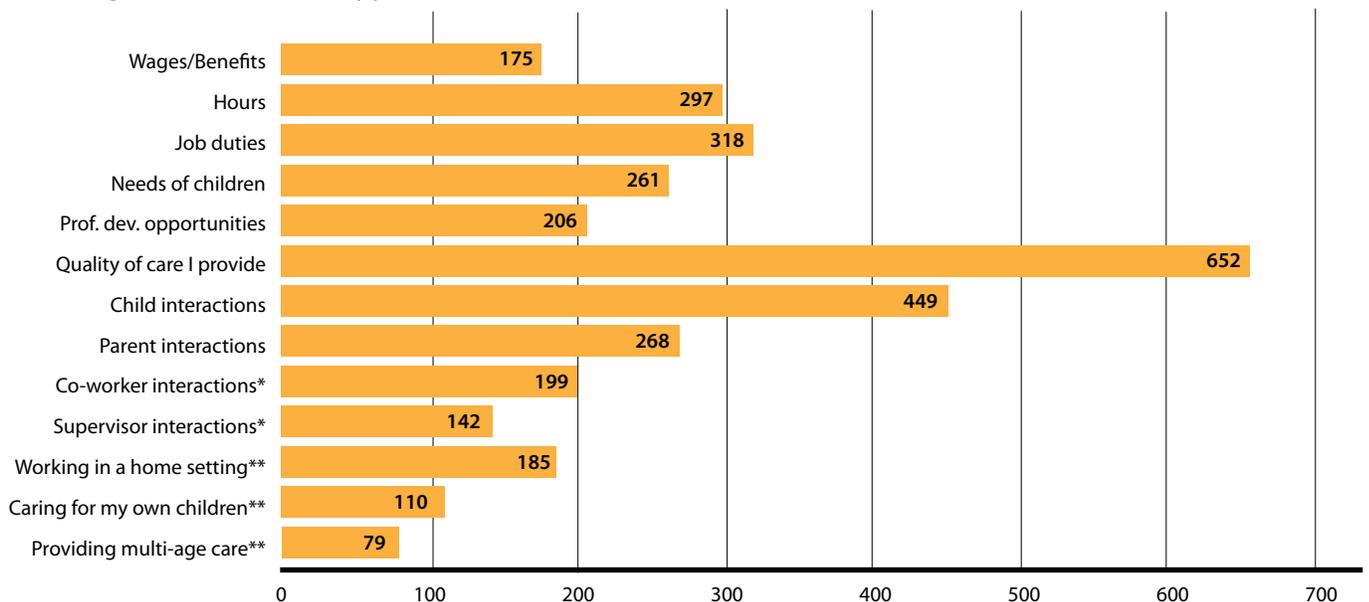


Figure 15

*only an option for group child care respondents ** only an option for family child care providers

Main reason for leaving an ECE employment position

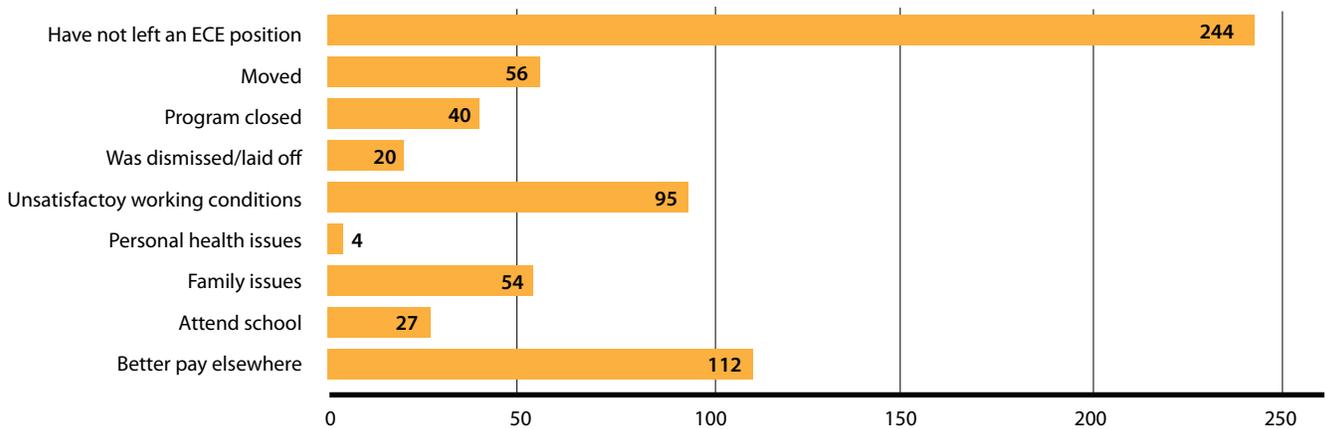


Figure 16

ready had plans for their future outside of the early education field. The most popular plan (providers could choose more than one) was retirement (45%), followed by working in another field with children (26%), working in another field without children (25%), going back to school (21%), and attending to family issues (12%). Providers were also asked to indicate why they had left child care employment situations in the past and the most popular reason for leaving was for better pay elsewhere (see **Figure 16**).

Turnover: Previous studies in Wisconsin and across the nation have found that child care providers leave the field at an alarming rate, often because of the profession’s low compensation and inadequate support for professional development. The loss of experienced providers is troublesome, but more devastating is the negative effect turnover has on young children.

Data from the study shows that 491 centers responded to survey questions regarding turnover. Of the 5,216.5 full-time employees that were working in these centers in January 2009, 1,081, or 21%, of them left within the year. This 21% turnover rate is a significant drop from previous Wisconsin workforce studies, which found the turnover rate ranged between 35% and 45%. Additionally, of the 5,237 employees that were working in December of 2009, 1,296, or 25%, of them had been hired between the

January and December of that year. These new hires were needed to replace those who had left the field.

Although a variety of factors are likely responsible for this change (no other job availability due to the recession, different survey methods used, etc.), programs that have been created to address retention surely have made a positive impact. Of the 340 survey respondents (24% of all respondents) who had received a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship, 90% said that it encouraged them to stay in the field. Likewise, of the 465 respondents (33% of all respondents) who had received a R.E.W.A.R.D.™ Wisconsin stipend, 81% agreed that it persuaded them to remain in the field. 61% of respondents who had not received a R.E.W.A.R.D. stipend indicated that a monetary supplement would entice them to stay in the field.

Center directors were also asked to indicate what they believed was the common reason for staff to leave their employment. The top five responses include:

- 173 directors chose “wages too low”
- 67 directors chose “changing fields”
- 62 directors chose “family issues”
- 58 directors chose “job duties too demanding”
- 50 directors chose “returning to school”

The turnover rate for family child care providers in Wisconsin cannot be accurately measured in a

single study. A longitudinal approach that would keep track of individual providers over time is needed to calculate a reliable rate. However, this study found that 75% of the 496 providers who entered the date they began working at their current family child care business had been in their position at least three years.

Professional Development

Despite low compensation, many child care providers stay in the field because they value and enjoy the important work they do. These providers often have difficulty accessing career counseling, training, or higher education to enhance their work. The increasing costs of higher education and training opportunities, along with the lack of a formal child care professional development system, contribute to this workforce challenge.

Professional membership and support:

Many child care professionals find support and learning opportunities through membership in a professional organization (see **Figure 17**). Amongst respondents, 36% reported that they were current members of WECA and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Additionally, 20% of respondents reported membership in another professional organization such as the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association (WCCAA) (n=68), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or the Wisconsin Family Child Care Association (WFCCA) (n=44), a CCR&R (n=19), or the Wisconsin Head Start Association (WHSA) (n=18). Of all survey respondents, 9% reported membership in a labor union, whereas 21%, or 112, of all family child care providers surveyed reported membership in a labor union. Most individuals (n=65) who reported being a member of a labor union were members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

The survey also asked early education profes-

Membership in professional associations

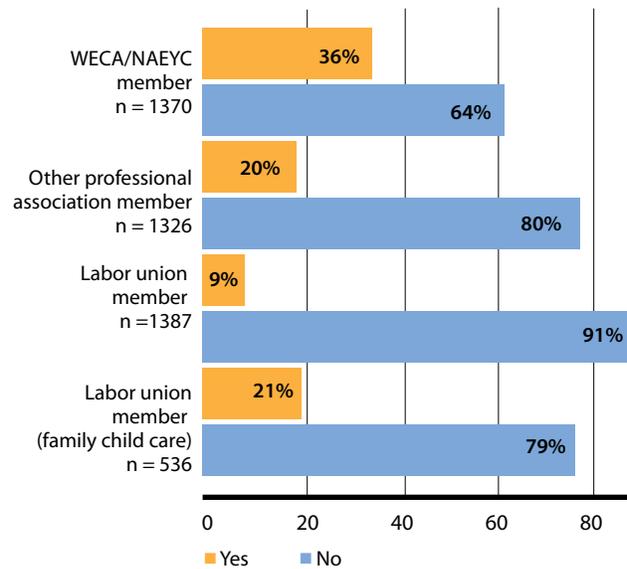


Figure 17

	Number of responses
Center Director	156
Co-worker/colleague in the field	185
Direct Supervisor	116
Resource and Referral Agency	865
The Registry	401
Local technical college or university	815
WECA	714
Local NAEYC affiliate	239
Mailings	81
Online	63
Early Education Station	34
Other	320
No response	32

Table H: Where child care professionals go for information about training or professional development (respondents could choose multiple responses)

Future professional development plans

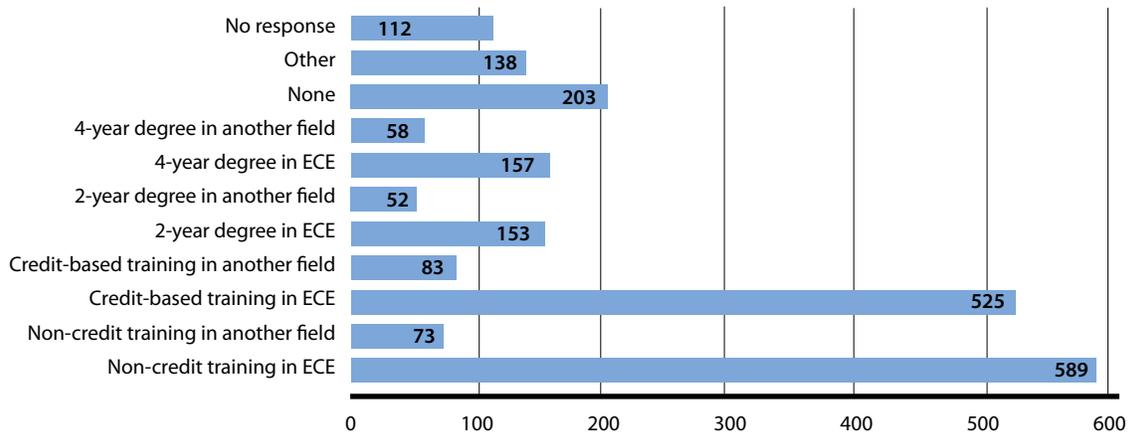


Figure 18



Despite low compensation, many child care providers stay in the field because they value and enjoy the important work they do.

professionals to note where usually they sought information on training or professional development opportunities. The top four entities that providers found this information included: Resource & Referral Agencies, local Colleges and Universities, WECA, and The Registry. **Table H** shows a listing of all entities that providers turned to for this information.

Professional development plans and needs:

The results of the study suggest that providers do want to get more education and training in early education. Approximately 62% of respondents said that they intend to pursue some type of credit-based training in early childhood education in the future, and 41% said that they intend to pursue non-credit training in the field (see **Figure 18**).

Child care providers identified topic areas in which they (or their staff) need more professional development or training. The top three topic areas identified by family child care providers were: behavior management, measuring children's developmental progress, and measuring children's academic progress. Group child care directors identified behavior management, measuring children's developmental progress, and education and care of children with disabilities as the top three topics (see **Figure 19**).

Individuals were also asked specifically about their training needs in two areas that have been

Future professional development plans

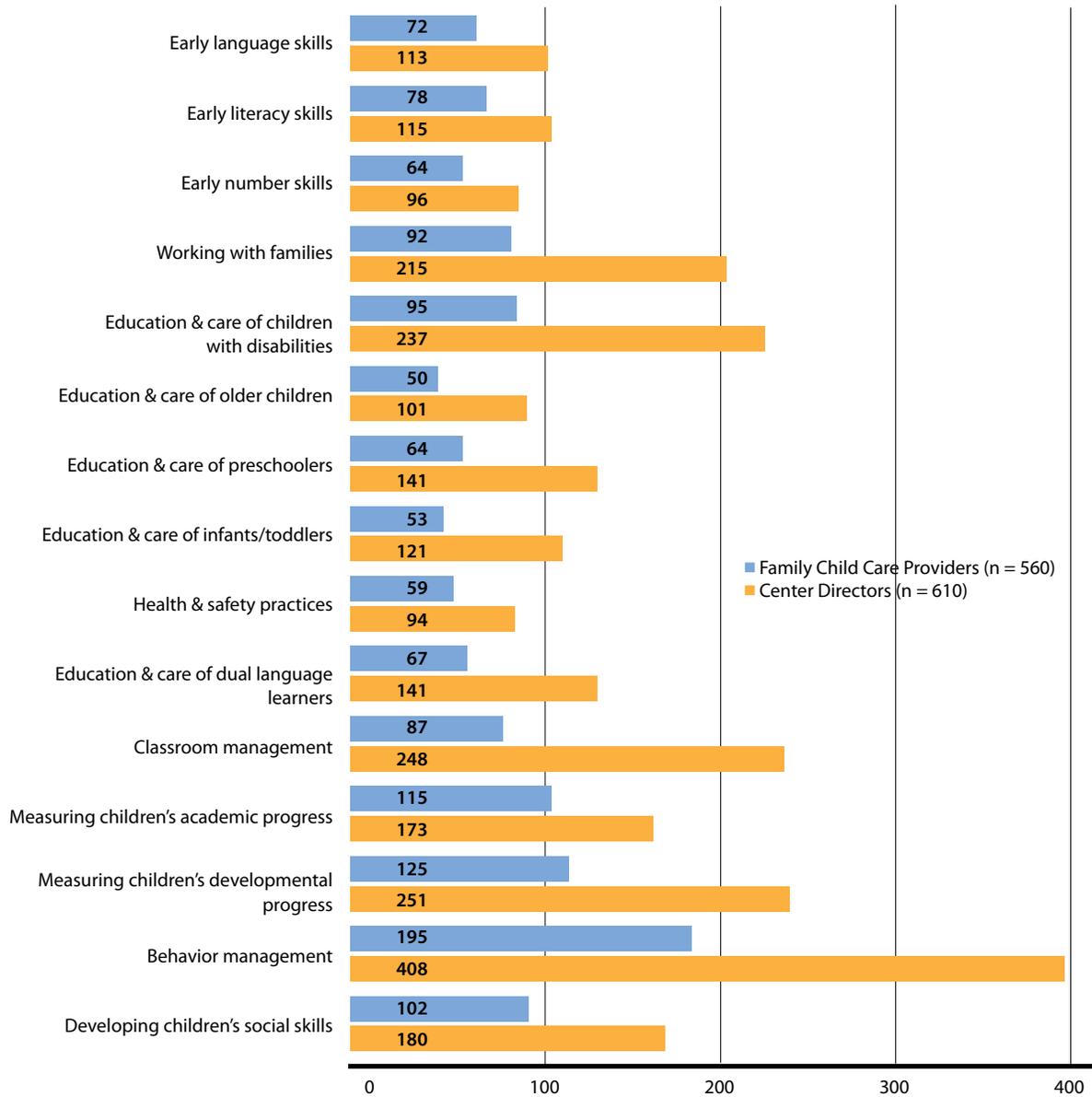


Figure 19

identified in the past by child care professionals as areas of concern: working with children with special needs, and working with children whose primary language is not English. Around 41% of respondents reported that they are currently working with children with special needs at their current employment. Fewer than half (46%) of providers reported that they had received specific training to work with children with special needs, and 70% of respondents reported that they desire more training in this area.

Approximately 19% of respondents reported that they are currently working with children whose primary language is not English at their current employment, and of these respondents, only 24% speak the primary language of the children they care for. Only 10% of providers reported that they had received specialized training to work with children whose primary language is not English, and around half (50.3%) of respondents reported that they desire more training in this area.

If I could change one thing about my job...

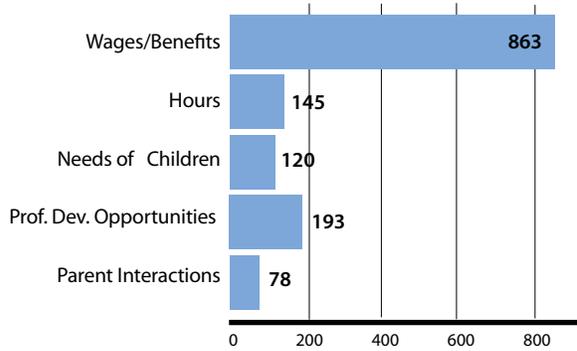


Figure 20

Barriers to professional development needs:

Although providers desire more professional development related to early education, and they have identified areas of need, many have difficulty accessing relevant training opportunities. In response to the question “If I could change one thing about my job...,” respondents chose professional development opportunities most frequently after wages/benefits (see **Figure 20**). Survey respondents were

also asked about which professional development opportunities would be most beneficial, and were able to check as many options as they desired. Free or lower cost training was the most popular selection, followed by online training options. **Figure 21** shows the top six choices for future professional development opportunities.

These findings are encouraging, as they show that in general providers do want to continue to improve the quality of care they can provide through professional development. Several barriers currently exist, however, and early education professionals often struggle to fulfill their desire to improve. A professional development system that addresses the barriers and includes the options selected by survey respondents will be beneficial to providers, families, and children.

Most beneficial professional development opportunities

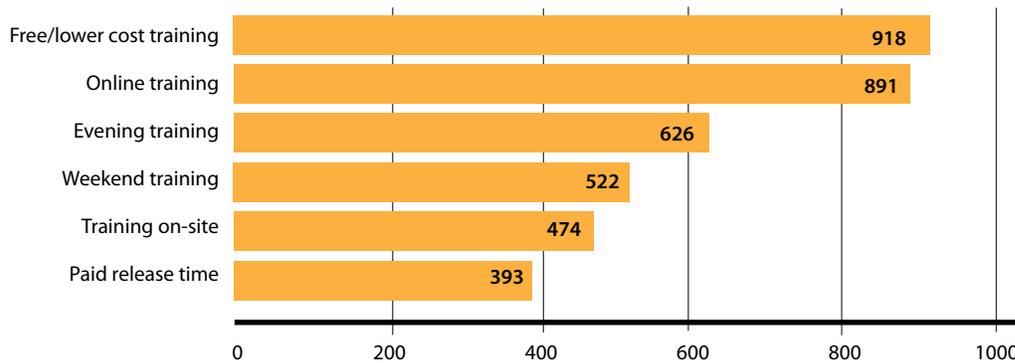


Figure 21

Looking to the Future

If the training and retention rate of early childhood teachers is critical to quality, Wisconsin officials and advocates should consider supporting several existing and new efforts that work to attract, support, and retain well-educated providers in the state.

Build on the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship program. The T.E.A.C.H. program provides credit-based educational scholarship opportunities for early childhood teachers, family child care providers, directors and administrators who work in regulated settings. The T.E.A.C.H. program links education, compensation, and retention in the field. Since its inception in 1999, T.E.A.C.H. has provided around 6,850 scholarships to over 4,040 early childhood professionals to attend credit-based courses. The T.E.A.C.H. program has a variety of scholarship models that early childhood professionals can choose from to meet their needs. If a system of credit for prior learning is implemented in Wisconsin, a new T.E.A.C.H. scholarship model could be created to assist early educators as they go through the process. T.E.A.C.H. counselors offer individualized professional development opportunities and career counseling to recipients. With increased funding, these supports could evolve to include professional portfolio development, on-site center training, web-based opportunities, credit for prior learning, and more.

Build on the R.E.W.A.R.D.™ Wisconsin stipend program. Since its inception, the R.E.W.A.R.D. program has been awarding incremental yearly salary supplements to early childhood professionals based on educational attainment and longevity in the field. Due to budgetary constraints in recent years, the R.E.W.A.R.D. program is awarding stipends to fewer educational levels, is awarding smaller stipends amounts, and has implemented a wage cap for participation. As the program moves forward, it needs more funding to be able to reward all well-educated providers who remain in the field.

Increased funding could also be used to increase the amount of stipends providers receive to make them even more meaningful.

Develop and implement comprehensive early childhood professional development policies across all sectors. Wisconsin should build a comprehensive, long-term system for providing workforce development supports to the early care and education workforce. This pathway will result in lower turnover and higher teacher quality in child care programs across the state. The system may include components like: job placement services, career counseling, business trainings for center directors (ex. hiring and HR practices), credit for prior learning support, and more. The system would coordinate the current fragmented early education professional development system.

Develop a robust funding infrastructure for early education. Wisconsin needs to explore and develop infrastructure models that align and leverage state, regional, and local resources, and engage the business, private, and philanthropic sectors as partners to improve early childhood outcomes. The Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council has been examining different models for providing leadership and direction for a statewide early childhood system, and is considering practices and options that would best fit Wisconsin. Several states have established public-private partnerships that leverage private funding at the state and local levels. ■

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^{iv}The Registry created a Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) to ensure that instructors are qualified and competent in their areas of instruction and that the training has quality content. Trainings that are approved PDAS tiered trainings are taught by qualified instructors and the content has been reviewed for accuracy. Higher tiered trainings are of higher-quality.

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