

Child Care Resources: Professional and Systems

FY2021 Early Childhood Grants

Buncombe Partnership for Children

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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Buncombe County requests proposals for community based projects to enhance outcomes for young children and their families in our community. Grants made through the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund will be focused on access to quality early childhood care and education.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Child Care Resources: Professional and Systems

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

Supporting capacity and/or quality for existing programs

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$153,000.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines for Early Childhood Grants (Grant Guidelines)?

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Give a brief history, including date of founding, focus, services, and record of success.

Established in 1995, Buncombe Partnership for Children (BPFC) is on a mission to strengthen the capacity of educators, families and the community to build a strong foundation for children's learning and development beginning at birth. We invest in and partner with organizations to offer programs that: improve the quality of early care and education; increase access to affordable, quality early care & education; expand early literacy activities; support children's healthy development; and provide family support.

We have strong, established working relationships with ECE providers and stakeholders and are already seen as an advocate and connector across the local EC community, as our programs directly support families, teachers, and program leaders. In the 2018-19 fiscal year, over 400 children enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program and In addition, 155 educators received a needed salary supplement averaging \$1,650 through our WAGE\$ program (proven to reduce turnover), and 63 4- and 5-star rated facilities received unrestricted Sustaining Facility Quality grants from BPFC to help with the ever-increasing costs of offering high-quality programs.

BPFC's Child Care Resources (CCR) program serves as the County's established resource for early childhood professional development and offers a rich variety of supports for teachers and administrators through training, classroom coaching, and technical assistance on topics ranging from developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed practices to child care business and administration. Last year, CCR supported over 700 educators with training, coaching and technical assistance in addition to: Hosting quarterly director's meetings, offering opportunities for FCCH owner and center directors to network and support each other; providing customized on-site trainings for programs; hosting the Transition to Kindergarten information event; and providing Reconnect for Resilience trainings and hosting a Racial Equity Institute training.

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

Research has proven that early childhood teachers benefit from professional development training opportunities in multiple ways. Due to the relatively low statewide requirements for individuals entering the field, coupled with Buncombe County's crippling teacher shortage, many teachers lack a basic or nuanced understanding of child development, behavior guidance strategies, or developmentally appropriate practice. The frustration of not having adequate training is one component of teacher burnout and turnover.

In addition, in 2018, only 12% of ECE teachers in Buncombe County held a Bachelor's degree and 21% held an Associate's degree in the field (CCSA). Professional development and training help fill in the inevitable gaps in child development knowledge left for teaching staff with low levels of education in ECE. A teacher without a degree is required to attend 20 hours of training each year in order to remain in the classroom. Teacher training offered at the systems level also accomplishes 3 important goals: 1. Removes some of the burden from administrators; 2. Training opportunities increase teacher retention by offering stress reduction tools and helping teachers gain confidence and skills; 3. Experienced teachers benefit from new research-based perspectives and strategies, as well as help prevent burnout.

ECE program directors, whether they are starting up a new program or are seasoned professionals, are often alone in managing the varied and stressful daily operations of the program. To be successful in this role, one must have knowledge in many different areas such as fiscal management, HR, developmentally appropriate practices and fostering interpersonal relationships. This level of responsibility can lead to “burnout” if the person in charge has no outside support. Research shows us that a capable Director is a vital factor in providing quality ECE to children. BPFC provides these critical supports to ECE program directors in Buncombe County.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

The major focus of the project is to offer relevant, research-based professional development and training opportunities to early childhood directors, teachers in licensed programs, students in high school CTE programs, Family Child Care Homes, and half-day programs, in order to raise the standard of care children receive in BC. BPFC uses training series, center-wide staff trainings, and follow-up coaching and mentoring with our technical assistance staff. Administrators may request specific topics for center-wide training based on programmatic need, or teachers may attend trainings offered to the county at large based on interest and areas of growth. Our trainings are grounded in adult learning theory and focus on meeting the needs of adults who have been working all day before coming to evening training sessions. Some training series are focused on improving the capacity and practice of professionals already in the field, such as Conscious Discipline. Others are focused on generating interest in the field and helping ensure the success of new providers, such as Child Care Business Basics, and trainings we provide for CTE students at local high schools. Still others are aimed at teacher retention, through offering Resources for Resilience to provide a foundation in brain development and social-emotional growth processes. Our larger community-wide events that are aimed at families as well as teachers are focused on equity and inclusion, Talking to Young Children about Race and the Colorful Pages Initiative.

Child Care Resources staff also serve as a critical resource for businesses or individuals looking to open or expand ECE programs in Buncombe county, providing support for planning, navigating the licensing process, preparing to implement early childhood best practices, and orientation to ECE systems in NC. These topics are also offered in consultation or training formats for interested non-profit boards and other community groups that may be interested.

People Served*

Who will be served by this project? Include demographics for children and families served, workforce, and/or any other relevant groups.

Currently there are approximately 950 people working in ECE programs in Buncombe County. In 2019, Child Care Resources provided training to 579 people, including: 13% African American, 1% Asian, 64% white, 2% Latinx, 20% prefer not to answer. All early childhood teachers and administrators in Buncombe County are welcome to attend the professional development opportunities we offer. We expect to serve a similar number in this program year.

Through providing programmatic support and increasing the competencies of the workforce as a whole, this program also serves the children and families who utilize licensed care in Buncombe County. One of the biggest indicators of quality in an early childhood program is stability, as high turnover strongly impacts children’s relationships with adult caregivers, and resulting social-emotional development. Continuing education and professional development, alongside integrated coaching and mentoring, is one of the strongest evidence-based ways to reduce teacher turnover and increase teacher commitment to the field.

The Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County (2018) report is attached.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with the goals of the fund, and how many people will be served.

For projects requesting funding for slots, also please include:

- Total new slots created
- Total slots maintained
- # of Subsidy slots created
- # of Subsidy slots maintained
- # of teachers/staff positions created
- # of teachers/staff positions maintained

Our work in professional development and technical assistance for the early childhood field will continue to raise the standard of care for children in Buncombe County. Supporting teacher practice through focused training/mentoring processes, and supporting teacher resilience through training focused on nervous system regulation, will help increase the quality and the stability of the field overall. This increase will be measured by a reduction in teacher turnover, an increase in the number of new teachers entering the field, new programs opening, and existing programs increasing slots where possible.

This year we will provide:

Training for 60 Reconnect for Resilience training participants

Training for 100 training participants in topics regarding trauma-sensitive care, resiliency, and special populations such as children in foster care and impacted by opioid use

10 people will receive start-up technical assistance to open new centers

20 new slots will be created

15 administrators will attend Child Care Business Basics and/or a Community of Practice focused on Child Care Business Practices

15 program directors will attend a Community of Practice focused on leadership and program management

10 directors and/or program leaders will receive director-specific technical assistance and/or coaching

2 non-profit board of early childhood programs will participate in workshops focused on local and state early childhood systems

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

In an ever-evolving field with complex needs on both the provider and consumer levels, our goalposts for success are constantly moving. Each year, we focus on the areas of need for professional development and education in the programs we partner with, both through teacher and administrator support, and through observation by our technical assistance staff and our community partners in classrooms. Because we strive to be organically responsive to actual program and teacher need in our specific offerings, it can be hard to predict what specific training topics will be offered most frequently in a given year.

We will know we are successful when teachers and directors attending trainings report that training offerings are meeting their needs for professional development, when programs are thriving and teacher turnover rates are reduced, and when new programs open with adequate technical assistance support.

We envision that in the coming program year that:

90% of training attendees will report that they can apply skills and knowledge learned in training to their daily work

90% of directors attending CCBB or a community of practice will report learning new information to support their programs

Equity*

Describe your approach to racial and socio-economic equity, both inside and outside the organization. What are some specific examples of practices that are in place or to be put in place with this project?

When our systems work collaboratively, are shaped using a racial equity lens, and implement strategies that account for structural racism, we ensure the best possible future for our children and community. Leading with racial equity means prioritizing strategies that work to improve outcomes for children of color and give special consideration to the knowledge, experience and innovation of people of color.

BPFC continues its racial equity journey with our Board, staff, and programs. Our Board has included goals related to board member diversity and racial equity in its last two governance plans. Staff have convened an Equity Team to help define what we mean by equity, diversity and inclusion. We have redesigned hiring practices, job descriptions, and our employee handbook using an equity lens. Staff hold monthly book/article discussion sessions focused on equity content. This year, we entered into a contract with Cenzontle for language justice training for board, staff and contractors. We are beginning to incorporate more language justice strategies with outreach materials and interpretation services. Our organization understands we have much to learn and are committed to changing our systems to produce better outcomes for people of color.

Within CCR we work to offer professional development opportunities that encourage teachers and directors to think holistically about the children in their care and the world around them. In the last year, topics included: Cultural Competence, Resources for Resilience, Talking to Young Children About Race, collaborations with Colorful Pages Coalition, and trainings focused on trauma-informed care, children with challenging behaviors, and children with exceptionalities. We offer trainings in multiple locations and contexts in order to make travel less of a burden on participants, and also offer centers on-site trainings at the request of administrators to lessen the financial and logistical difficulties.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

Collaboration with community partners is essential to our mission in CCR. In our technical assistance and training work with early education programs we collaborate with multiple agencies. While each program has its own area of expertise, we work with Child Care Health Consultants from MAHEC, Licensing Consultants from Division of Child Development and Early Education, Regional TA Specialists from Southwestern Child Development Commission, Preschool Intervention Specialists at F.I.R.S.T, and administrators at individual centers to support each individual program according to its needs. In addition, we work with a wide variety of

expert trainers from many agencies and programs to offer professional development opportunities. Collaboration and consultation with experts in a variety of fields allows us to offer stronger, more meaningful services to our community.

CCR&R staff are also engaged in community collaborative groups such as the Children's Collaborative, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Learning Collaborative, Early Head Start Homelessness Task Force, Local Interagency Coordinating Council, Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative, Buncombe County's Women's Commission, and more. Staff participation in these groups allows us to spread the word in the community about our project and services and connects staff to resources for the teachers and administrators with whom we work.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

CCR Budget 20-21.xlsx

This project has received funding from Buncombe County since 2009 when Child Care Services closed and the County provided a portion of the funding to BPFC to continue the services. This request maintains support for four Early Childhood Program Consultants, a Professional Development Consultant, and a Director, with blended grant funds from Smart Start and Southwestern Child Development Commission (SWCDC).

Traditionally, local partnerships have carried the work of CCR in each NC county. Each local partnership's Board of Directors decide whether or not to invest in CCR systems work and BPFC has committed to match county funding with Smart Start funds. Funding from SWCDC comes from the Child Care Development Block Grant, a federal source, and is allocated to each county based on population statistics. Smart Start funding has been received since the organization of BPFC more than 20 years ago and we began receiving funding from SWCDC in 2009. These funds may all be used for training and technical assistance purposes.

Other than personnel funds, this request covers other fixed operating expenses and training expenses. CCR agencies typically charge participants \$5 per hour for contact credit training. These funds are then used to purchase food for trainings and pay for presenter honorariums.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

Sustaining long term funding for this program requires private fundraising and grant pursuit from multiple sources. We expect to receive a small increase in Smart Start funds for FY 20-21 and will allocate some of this to CCR. We have increased our private fundraising efforts by shifting our part-time Fund Development Director to a full-time position in September 2019. The additional time dedicated to fundraising with an emphasis on individual and corporate giving is gaining momentum and we expect to meet our fundraising goal. However, to fund a program of this scope is not something that private fundraising alone can sustain.

We generate program income from training fees and expect a slight increase with the small expansion of the teaching workforce and popularity of professional development offerings.

We were contacted by a nearby Smart Start Local Partnership to consider contracting to provide them with our CCR coaching services. While a compliment to the good work of CCR the team, the revenue would

only cover a required staff expansion and travel costs would be prohibitive. We will be exploring funding opportunities that may arise through the Think Babies Campaign and our Fund Development Director will research additional grant opportunities.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

Partial funding would reduce services available to the ECE community.

Multi-Year Funding

If you would like this project to be considered for multi-year funding (up to 3 years), what amounts would you request for years 2 and 3? What milestones would this funding allow you to accomplish? Explain why more years are needed to accomplish goals.

This request is for one year, however we intend to reapply for future funding.

Resource Support

How can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work (related to equity, scale, or impact)?

Consultation for long-term data analysis, data visualization, and reducing barriers for black and Latinx teachers and administrators in Buncombe County.

Scale-up

What is your vision for how the strategies from this project could contribute to a significant scale-up the overall system to collectively address the child care crisis?

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

Working-in-Early-Care-and-Ed-Buncombe-Co-Report-2018-FINAL.pdf

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- CCR Budget 20-21.xlsx
- Working-in-Early-Care-and-Ed-Buncombe-Co-Report-2018-FINAL.pdf

Early Childhood Education and Development Fund

Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	Buncombe Partnership for Children
Project Name:	Child Care Resources: Professional Development, Leadership, and Systems Support
Grant Amount Requested:	\$153,000

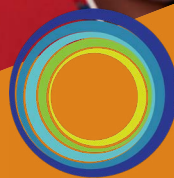
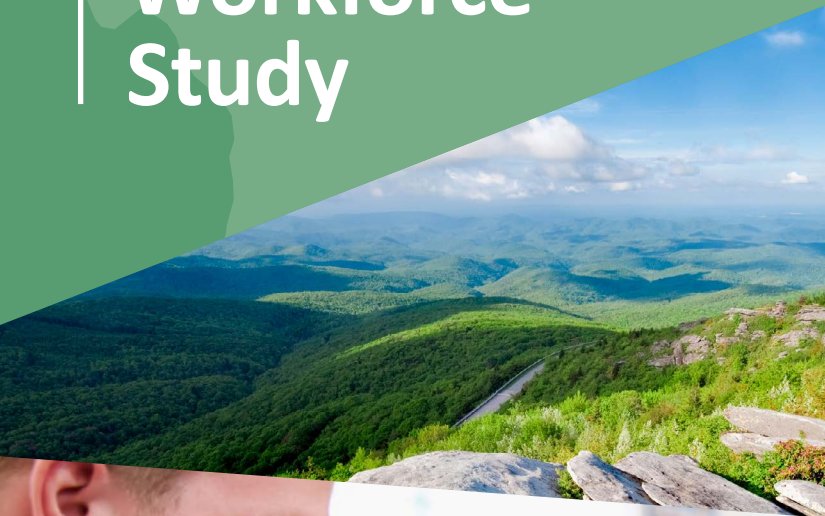
FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant	\$ 153,000.00	
Smart Start Funds	\$ 202,878.00	Smart Start grant funds
Southwestern Child Development Commission	\$ 47,445.00	Region 8 CCR&R Grant
BPFC Program Income	\$ 5,000.00	Program Income from training fees
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 408,323.00	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 96,280.00	\$ 219,166.00	\$ 315,446.00	1.5 total FTEs (4 ECPC, Director, ED,AD)
Travel/Training	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 21,500.00	Travel to support PD, in- and out-of-state
Technology	\$ 7,500.00		\$ 7,500.00	Replace aging technology (computers and recording equipment, training room tech)
Curriculum/Assessments			\$ -	
Licensing/Dues	\$ 850.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,650.00	
Nutrition			\$ -	
Transportation			\$ -	
Supplies/Materials	\$ 7,650.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 13,650.00	supplies
Building Maintenance/Repair	\$ 2,460.00	\$ 3,601.00	\$ 6,061.00	
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities	\$ 25,463.00	\$ 6,585.00	\$ 32,048.00	
Furniture			\$ -	
Playground/Outdoor space			\$ -	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage	\$ 3,584.00	\$ 5,546.00	\$ 9,130.00	Communications and postage, printing and binding, classified advertising
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)			\$ -	
Other (please list in comments section)	\$ 713.00	\$ 625.00	\$ 1,338.00	Equipment rental
Total			\$ 408,323.00	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$ 5,484,282.00	Some grants received in 17-18 were budgeted for spending in 18-19
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$ 5,571,472.00	Includes \$1,064,717 for child care vouchers & 2M+for NC Pre-K slots
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$ 5,695,892.00	Current approved budget
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$ 5,710,000.00	

Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County

2018 Workforce Study



Buncombe
Partnership
for Children

a partner in the
Smart Start network



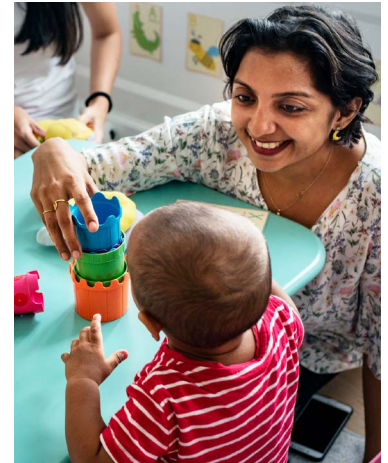
published July 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Nestled proudly among the Blue Ridge and Great Craggy Mountains of Western North Carolina and along the Eastern Continental Divide, Buncombe County is home to a fast-growing population of over 259,000.¹ Buncombe is the largest county by population both in Western North Carolina and in the Asheville Metropolitan Area, made up of Buncombe and four of its surrounding counties. Asheville, the county seat, is the 12th most populous city in North Carolina, known for its status as both a historic community and a modern hub for folk arts, technology, culture, and natural beauty. Besides being a prime destination for tourism, Buncombe also attracts thousands of students to the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, its satellite campus of Western Carolina University, and other nearby schools and universities. As a relatively wealthy county, Buncombe has the second highest median income (\$48,464) of any county in Western North Carolina.¹ Yet, the area's reputation as a bastion of progress, educational success, and prosperity sometimes fails to tell the whole story for its early care and education professionals and the children in their care.



According to the research of NC Child, approximately 65,500 children currently live in Buncombe with 31% of them being five years old or younger (approximately the same percentage of children under six in North Carolina as a whole).² Of Buncombe's children, approximately 43% live in poor or low income homes, with about 18% living below the poverty line.² The trend of a significant decline in the child poverty rate since 2012 (26%) is promising, and so is its comparatively low child poverty rate in relationship to the surrounding counties.³ However, it is important to note that by sheer number, Buncombe has the largest population of children in poverty both in the Asheville Metro Area and Western North Carolina as a whole.³ To address this profound inequality, a focus on quality, supportive early care and education is vital. Research by James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate in Economics and professor at the University of Chicago, lays out the case for investments in high quality early care and education as a cost effective way to strengthen and grow the economy. His research points to a 7–13% return on investment and shows that the earlier the investments in human capital, the greater returns over programs later in life necessary for interventions and remediation.⁴

For early care and education (ECE) professionals as well, poverty wages, lack of access to quality education, and economic inequality are often a reality. Though some conditions are improving, many early childhood educators make a salary below the Asheville Metropolitan Area's living wage, as defined by Just Economics (\$13.00 per hour in 2017 and 2018 without health insurance).⁵ Many lack access to health insurance and benefits. Degree attainment for early care and education professionals has increased in recent years, but there is still room for improvement. The link between adequate compensation, satisfying working conditions, and access to higher education and improvements in the quality of early childhood education is clear. Thus, understanding the conditions of Buncombe County's early care and education workforce is an imperative step for ensuring access, both for young children and ECE professionals, to Buncombe County's prosperity and robust education system.



¹ QuickFacts: Buncombe County, North Carolina. US Census Bureau: <http://bit.ly/INC110217>

² 2019 NC Data Card, NC Child: <http://bit.ly/2019NCDDataCard>

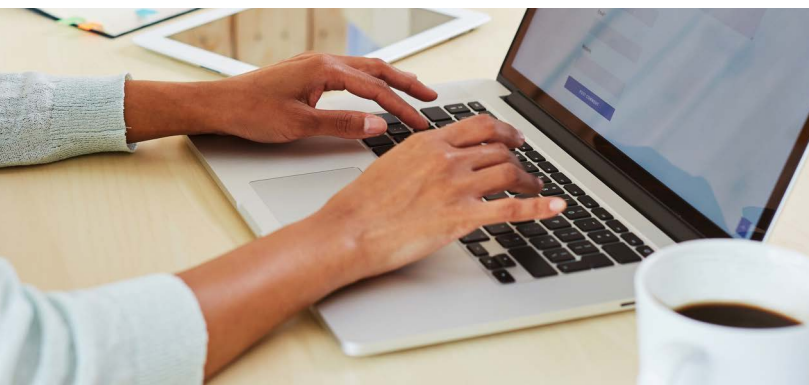
³ KIDS COUNT Data Center, 2008-2019. NC Child: <http://bit.ly/KidsCountDataCenter08-19>

⁴ "The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program." Garcia, J.L., Heckman, J., Leaf, D.E., Prados, M.J. 2016: heckmanequation.org.

⁵ Wage Rate. Just Economics: <http://bit.ly/wage-rate>

2018 WORKFORCE STUDY FINDINGS

With funding from the Buncombe County Partnership for Children, Child Care Services Association (CCSA) conducted a county level survey of the early care and education workforce in Buncombe County from September 2018 through February 2019. This study provides comprehensive data on teachers, assistant teachers, and directors in early care and education centers and on the licensed early care and education programs in which they work. Licensed centers include programs operated by public schools, for-profit entities, and not-for-profit entities, including Head Start. Additional information from similar statewide studies conducted by CCSA in 2015 (as well as limited data from 2012–2014) is also provided. Comparing the data from these surveys to statewide data from the most recent, 2015 statewide workforce study reveal both similarities and differences between statewide and local data. Results from the 2019 statewide workforce study will be available in 2020 for future comparisons.



Data for the center-based workforce report were collected through two linked surveys of the population of early childhood program directors and of teachers working in those programs conducted from September 2018 through February 2019 (based on the Division of Child Development and Early Education information as of July 2018⁶). Usable surveys were obtained from 56 directors who constituted 71% of the total population (N=79) of all directors of licensed child care programs in Buncombe County that enroll children birth through five. All directors in the population were sent packets with surveys, postage paid return envelopes, raffle tickets, and a small thank you gift for themselves and all of their teachers. Directors were

asked to distribute surveys and associated materials to their teaching staff. For those directors who returned their surveys, multiple efforts were made to secure surveys from their teaching staff and usable surveys were returned by 244 of those teachers and assistant teachers out of an estimated 534 in the participating centers (46%). An additional 33 surveys were returned from teachers and assistants whose directors did not return surveys.

Program level and teacher level data have been weighted to reflect the county populations of centers and teaching staff respectively, adjusting for known individual, program, and community characteristics associated with response bias. These factors include the location, size, sponsorship, and star rating of a program. Most percentages and other values reported in text, tables, and graphs incorporate these sampling weights, permitting extrapolation to the total population of centers (N=79) serving children under six who are not yet in school. In addition, the teaching staff survey data were weighted to account for the effects of non-response not only at the teaching staff level but also to account for non-response among centers. Fortunately most (70%) of the 79 centers whose directors returned their own surveys also yielded at least some teacher surveys. The size of the teaching staff of each center was initially estimated from the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) licensing file and this number was altered if director survey responses and/or phone calls to the center director yielded an estimated number that was different from what was reported from the DCDEE file.

More information about the sampling design and survey execution is contained in [Appendix A](#) to this report.

Throughout this report, the median value is usually reported as the measure of central tendency, e.g., for hourly wages and time intervals. As such, “average” is used interchangeably with “median” unless specifically noted otherwise. Other definitions relevant to this report can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Early Care and Education (ECE) Centers

STAR RATING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. Across the state, the distribution of early childhood programs varies considerably by star rating levels, size, and sponsorship. Buncombe County, likewise, shows diversity across these variables. [Table 1](#) displays the statewide and county specific distribution of programs. In Buncombe County there are approximately 79 centers serving around 4,000 children birth through five. Only about 18% of licensed centers serving about 16% of the total

⁶ Data from NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, July 30, 2018.

enrollment of this age group in center based care are rated as having 2-stars or fewer. (This is slightly higher than the 2015 state's 17% of programs serving 15% of the enrollment at this level of care.) This group includes not only 1- and 2-star licensed centers, but also GS-110 (Notice of Compliance centers) and those with a temporary, provisional, or probationary license. Another 10% of programs in Buncombe County have 3-stars and serve about 5% of children birth through five enrolled in centers. (Statewide in 2015, 3-star centers were 18% of centers and about 13% of enrollment.) Four-star programs constitute about 17% of programs in the county and serve 17% of the birth to five years olds enrolled in centers. (Statewide in 2015, 4-star centers comprised a higher 24% of programs and 23% of the enrollment.) Finally, over half of centers, 56%, have 5-stars and serve 61% of the birth to five year old enrollment in centers. (Statewide in 2015, fewer programs, 42% had 5-stars and a similar lower percentage, 50%, of children were enrolled in these programs.) See [Tables 1 and 2](#).

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF CENTERS BY STAR LEVEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

		Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018
Capacity	Number of Programs	4095	79
Star Level	Under 3 Stars	17%	18%
	3 Stars	18%	10%
	4 Stars	24%	17%
	5 Stars	42%	56%
Type of Organization	For Profit	56%	35%
	Not for Profit	21%	33%
	Public	23%	33%

Source: DCDEE files and survey data

TABLE 2: BIRTH TO FIVE ENROLLMENT IN CENTERS BY STAR RATING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

		Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018
	Total	172,171	4,049
Enrollment by Star Rating	Under 3 Stars	15%	16%
	3 Stars	13%	5%
	4 Stars	23%	17%
	5 Stars	50%	61%
Enrollment by Organizational Structure	For Profit	58%	36%
	Not for Profit	24%	42%
	Public	18%	22%

Source: DCDEE files and survey data

Buncombe County has a fairly even split among not-for-profit (33%), for-profit (35%), and public (33%) programs. In 2018, the organizational form serving the largest percentage of birth through five year old children in Buncombe County is the non-profit center consisting of 33% of all centers with 42% of the birth through five center enrollment in the county. In North Carolina in 2015, non-profit programs constituted just 21% of all centers and served 24% of the birth through five center enrollment. For-profit programs in the county account for 35% of centers with 36% of the birth through five enrollment. North Carolina's for-profit centers consisted of 56% of all centers (58% of total birth through five enrollment). The remaining approximately one in three centers (33%) is characterized as a public or quasi-public organization and about 22% of the enrolled birth through five population is served by these programs. For comparison, approximately one in five centers (23%) in the state was characterized as a public or quasi-public organization, and about 18% of the enrolled birth through five population was served by these programs. See [Tables 1 and 2](#).

NC PRE-K. *Table 3* delineates program characteristics of NC Pre-K programs. Examining the table reveals that publicly sponsored programs, especially Head Start programs, are more likely to have an NC Pre-K program than non-publicly sponsored programs. In fact, 100% of the Head Start programs in the sample have an NC Pre-K classroom while over two thirds of public schools programs (70%) also have NC Pre-K classrooms. On the other hand, the far more prevalent for-profit and not-for-profit centers are much less likely to have NC Pre-K classrooms. In fact, 0% of the for-profit centers in the sample had an NC Pre-K classroom. While just over 1 in 10 not-for-profit centers had an NC Pre-K classroom, all of these were located in community sponsored programs (19%) as opposed to faith based centers (0%).

TABLE 3: NC PRE-K BY PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

		Percent With NC Pre-K Classrooms
Buncombe	All Programs	31%
Type of Organization	For-Profit	0%
	Not-for-Profit	12%
	Public	86%
Sponsoring Agency	For-Profit Single Site	0%
	For-Profit Multi-Site	0%
	Not-For-Profit Community	19%
	Not-For-Profit Faith	0%
	Head Start Programs	100%
	Public Schools	70%
Star Rating	No stars through 3 stars	0%
	4 Stars	8%
	5 Stars	55%

Source: 2018 Directors Survey

Further, there is a positive correlation between a program's star rating and the likelihood of having an NC Pre-K classroom; more than half (55%) of 5-star programs in the county have at least one NC Pre-K classroom, while none of the 3-star or below programs have these classrooms. Eight percent (8%) of 4-star programs have an NC Pre-K classroom. This is to be expected because the state's NC Pre-K standards are related to license type.

Thus, there appears to be mutually reinforcing relationships between centers' star ratings, public sector or public school sponsorship, and the presence of an NC Pre-K designation.



STAFFING. The child care center staff that participated in the director survey represented a wide variety of positions in the early childhood field. Weighting those responses to represent the total director population yielded results that show titles such as: director (67%); director/owner (24%); and various other titles (10%) such as assistant director, supervisor, and manager.

Among staff who completed a teacher survey, about two thirds (67%) identified themselves as teachers or lead teachers. Nearly a third (32%) were assistant teachers, substitutes, or floaters. Grouping these differing titles along with the "other" titles such as group leader, assistant, etc. resulted in about 68% being considered "teachers" and 32% being considered "assistant teachers." Respondents to the teacher survey included a small number of other staff (1%) who, although reporting that they teach or work with classrooms of children, on the basis of available information, these individuals could not be reliably classified as either a teacher or an assistant teacher. These individuals are included in aggregate results describing "teaching staff" but are omitted from those analyses where "teachers" and "assistant teachers" are reported separately.

About half (51%) of those filling out the teacher survey indicated that they work with infants, toddlers, or twos at least some of the time. A lower 46% only teach infants, toddlers, or twos. Just over half (52%) indicated that they work with preschool children (three to five year olds) at least sometimes, with 46% only working with this age group.

WAGE SCALES. Center directors reported compensation scales for center teaching staff that included low starting wages and limits on the highest wages paid to teachers and assistants. (See [Table 4.](#)) In 2018, starting teachers in Buncombe County earned a median \$13.00 per hour compared to the 2015 starting teacher statewide amount of \$10.00 per hour. Similar to starting teachers, the median starting wage for assistant teachers in the county in 2018 was higher than the statewide 2015 amount, with Buncombe County programs paying their starting assistant teachers a median of \$11.60 per hour compared to \$9.00 per hour statewide in 2015. The 2018 median highest paid teacher wage in the county of \$17.05 per hour was higher than the \$12.50 per hour highest teacher wage statewide in 2015. For Buncombe County assistant teachers, their 2018 median highest wage of \$13.00 was higher than the 2015 statewide median highest wage of \$10.00 per hour.

**TABLE 4: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY
AND BY NC PRE-K CLASSROOM DESIGNATION**

	Starting Teacher	Highest Teacher	Starting Assistant Teacher	Highest Assistant Teacher	Assistant Director
All Buncombe Centers	\$13.00	\$17.05	\$11.60	\$13.00	\$15.30
Centers w/NC Pre-K Classroom	\$18.33	\$20.56	\$11.62	\$13.00	\$19.50
Centers w/o NC Pre-K Classroom	\$12.00	\$14.00	\$10.00	\$11.78	\$15.00

Source: 2018 Directors Survey

Typical starting and highest salaries for classroom staff, as well as actual salaries for assistant directors and directors, vary by auspice and star rating. As shown in [Table 5](#), working in the public sector, whether in a public school or in a Head Start program, results in higher salaries. The next highest salaries are paid in not-for-profit centers, though typically this applies specifically to not-for-profits with a community sponsored board (as opposed to those programs that are faith based). The lowest overall wages are paid in for-profit programs. These wage findings reflect similar national findings from the Government Accountability Office,⁷ which found low wages among all child care providers but higher pay for individuals working in publicly funded programs such as Head Start.

TABLE 5: WAGES OF ECE TEACHING STAFF BY PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS, 2018

		Assistant Teacher		Teacher		Assistant Director	Director
		Median Starting	Median Highest	Median Starting	Median Highest		
Buncombe (2018)	All Programs	\$11.60	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$17.05	\$15.30	\$21.59
Type of Organization	For-Profit	\$9.91	\$11.00	\$10.50	\$13.83	\$15.11	\$17.00
	Not-For-Profit	\$10.06	\$12.96	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$16.73	\$18.52
	Public	\$11.62	\$13.00	\$18.33	\$20.56	NA	\$22.60
Sponsoring Agency	For-Profit Single Site	\$9.91	\$11.00	\$11.25	\$13.83	\$15.63*	\$17.00
	For-Profit Multi-Site	\$9.50*	\$11.50*	\$9.75*	\$13.25*	\$14.88*	\$17.00*
	Not-For-Profit Community	\$12.00	\$14.00	\$13.00	\$18.00	\$16.15	\$19.42
	Not-For-Profit Faith	\$9.92	\$11.09	\$12.00	\$13.25	\$16.97*	\$17.19
	Head Start Programs	\$11.62	\$13.00	\$18.33	\$20.56	NA	\$22.60
	Public Schools	\$13.00	\$15.00	\$20.21	\$36.63	NA	\$29.80*
Star Rating	No stars through 3 Stars	\$9.00	\$10.94	\$10.51	\$12.00	\$15.00*	\$18.41
	Four Stars	\$9.82	\$11.44	\$12.00	\$13.93	\$18.87*	\$17.51
	Five Stars	\$11.62	\$13.00	\$16.50	\$20.56	\$14.75	\$22.60

Source: 2018 Directors Survey

*Based on fewer than 5 programs reporting

⁷ US Government Accountability Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Finance, US Senate, February 2012. "Early Childcare and Education.HHS and Education are Taking Steps to Improve Workforce Data and Enhance Worker Quality."



When looking at the star rating of programs, the higher the star rating, the higher the wage scales for classroom staff. However, this pattern does not necessarily exist for program administrators. For assistant teachers, salaries in 5-star programs range from a median \$11.62 per hour to \$13.00 per hour. In 3-star programs or below, this median salary range drops to a range of \$9.00 per hour to \$10.94 per hour. For teachers, 5-star programs pay a median of \$16.50 per hour to \$20.56 per hour compared to just \$10.51 per hour to \$12.00 per hour in 3-star or below programs. Given that the living wage in the Buncombe County area is \$13.00 per hour for a single person,⁸ the wage range for assistant teachers, even in the highest quality programs only allows for those at the very top to meet this standard. For teachers in lower star-rating programs, wage ranges, similarly, fall below the living wage.

Despite these overall trends, there are important wage scale and wage progression differences for teaching staff depending on whether or not they work in a program that has an NC Pre-K classroom on site. Licensed early care and education programs with NC Pre-K classrooms have substantially better compensation at all levels, particularly for teachers, than do those without such classrooms as shown in [Table 4](#). For both starting and highest paid teachers and assistant teachers, working in settings with an NC Pre-K classroom results in higher compensation. Median starting teacher salary in programs with at least one NC Pre-K classroom is a full 53% more than median starting teacher wages in programs without NC Pre-K classrooms (\$18.33 vs. \$12.00). The median highest paid teachers working in settings with an NC Pre-K classroom make 47% more than the highest paid teachers in settings without an NC Pre-K classroom (median highest wage of \$20.56 vs. \$14.00 per hour). There is also a wage premium for an assistant teacher who is just starting out: \$11.62 in those settings that have an NC Pre-K classroom vs. \$10.00 in other settings. This difference is less, though still significant, with seniority as highest paid assistant teachers were reported to have a median wage of \$13.00 in settings with NC Pre-K classrooms compared with only \$11.78 per hour in other settings. Outside of the classroom, actual wages for assistant directors are also higher in programs with at least one NC Pre-K classroom (\$19.50 vs. \$15.00). Data suggest that employment at a site with an NC Pre-K classroom results in a more rapid wage progression for all of the staff in such settings, not just those specifically in NC Pre-K classrooms.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS. Employment benefits offered by centers in Buncombe County are shown in [Table 6](#) and compared to those offered statewide. In Buncombe County in 2018, 58% of programs provided at least some help with health insurance compared to under half (49%) statewide in 2015 with the difference being found in the percentage of programs fully paying for health insurance for their staff (27% in Buncombe County vs. 19% statewide). Although relatively few programs offer free child care to employees (11%), just over half of programs (53%) offer reduced child care fees. A larger percentage of programs in Buncombe County in 2018 offer parental leave compared to statewide in 2015 (71% vs. 56%). Overall, the majority of programs give their staff at least some paid time off though the amounts of each may vary. Paid holidays are the most frequently given by programs at 92%. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of centers provide paid vacation days for employees and 86% give at least some paid sick leave. These percentages are higher than the percentage of centers statewide offering paid time off in 2015 (90% holidays, 83% vacation and 72% sick).

TABLE 6: EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS IN ECE CENTERS

	State 2015	Buncombe 2018
Fully Paid Health Insurance	19%	27%
Partially Paid Health Insurance	30%	31%
Free Child Care	13%	11%
Reduced Child Care Fee	52%	53%
Parental Leave	56%	71%
Paid Retirement	39%	55%
Paid Sick Leave	72%	86%
Paid Vacation	83%	88%
Paid Holidays	90%	92%

⁸ Wage Rate. Just Economics: <http://bit.ly/wage-rate>, 2018

Over the years since NC Pre-K's inception (formerly More at Four), public pre-k programs have contributed to increases in many types of benefits. Working in sites with an NC Pre-K classroom increases the opportunity to receive health insurance, parental leave, disability, and retirement. Working in a site with an NC Pre-K classroom, likewise, increases the chance for teachers to receive paid time off including sick, vacation, and holiday. See [Figure 1](#). Statewide and in Buncombe County, NC Pre-K programs are the drivers for increasing the overall benefits provided by programs offering these benefits over the past decade.

FIGURE 1: BENEFITS IN PROGRAMS WITH AND WITHOUT NC PRE-K CLASSROOMS, 2018

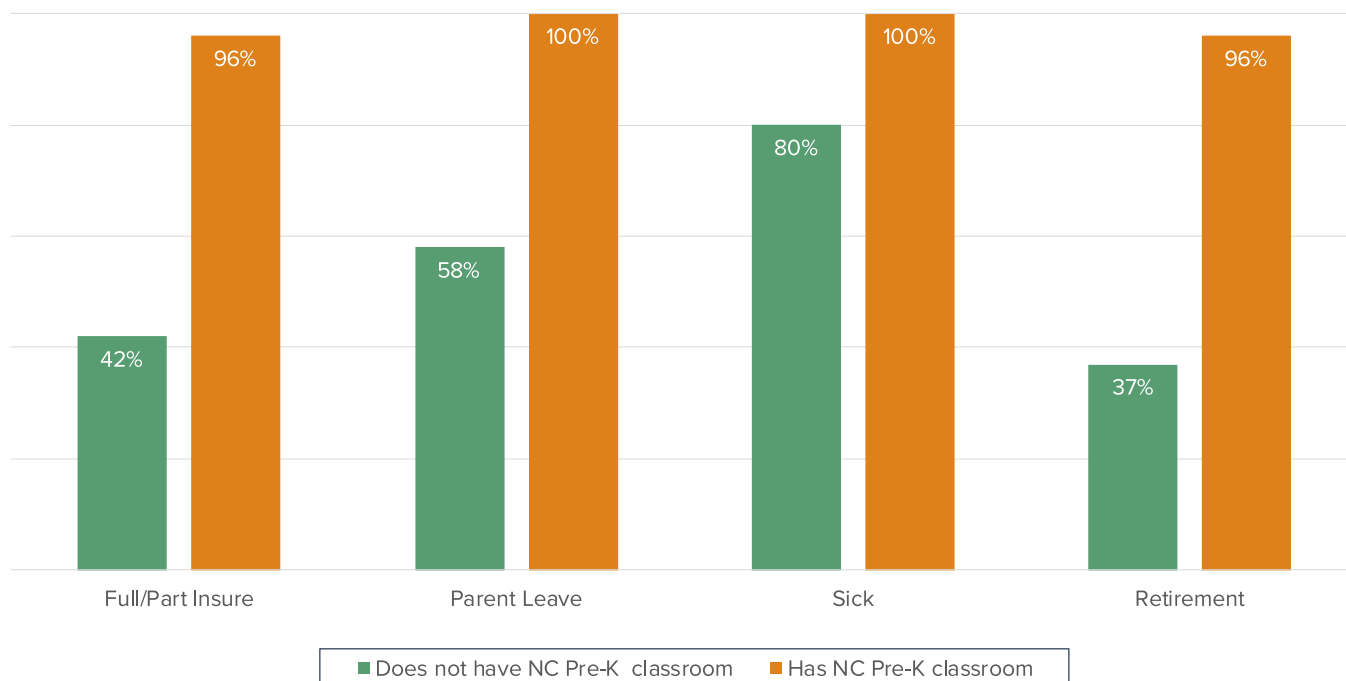


TABLE 7: HEALTH INSURANCE AND WAGES BY AUSPICE, 2018

Type of Center	Employers Offering at Least Partly Paid Health Insurance	Median Starting Teacher Wage	Median Highest Teacher Wage
Private For-Profit (single center)	17%	\$11.25	\$13.83
Private Not-For-Profit (sponsored by faith community)	43%	\$12.00	\$13.25
Private For-Profit (multi-center)*	60%	\$9.75	\$13.25
Private Not-For-Profit (committee/board sponsored)	61%	\$13.00	\$18.00
Head Start	100%	\$18.33	\$20.56
Public School	100%	\$20.21	\$36.63

*Based on fewer than 5 programs reporting.

Whether or not a child care provider receives any support with health insurance (as well as other benefits and their wages) relates to the organizational auspice of the program in which the teacher works. See [Table 7](#). All (100%) publicly sponsored programs offer their teachers either free or reduced health insurance, and in most of these programs, a teacher can expect a starting wage of at least \$18.33 per hour. Those providers working in non-profits (excluding those sponsored by faith communities) fall below public employees with 61% receiving full or partially paid health insurance with a starting median wage of \$13.00 per hour and highest median wage of \$18.00 per hour. The slight majority (60%) of employees in multi-center, for-profit programs receive at least partially paid health insurance, yet have a median starting wage of just \$9.75 per hour (typically having a top wage of \$13.25). Forty-three percent (43%) of non-profit, faith-based programs offer health insurance and a starting median wage of \$12.00. Employees in single center, for-profit centers are not as likely to receive help with health

insurance as just 17% of these program offer this benefit. Salaries in these programs are also on the low end with median starting wages of \$11.25 per hour and median highest wages of \$13.83 per hour. These types of centers are the most prevalent form of organization in the county; almost 28% of all centers in the county are single site, private, for-profit centers. On the other hand, about 23% are publicly sponsored Head Start programs and just 7% are publicly funded schools.

OVERTIME PAY. Among the 58% of the teaching staff who reported that they had ever worked over 40 hours per week, 63% said that their centers paid them time and a half for the overtime hours that they worked. When directors were asked this same question about their teaching staff, a lower 61% said that their teachers sometimes work over 40 hours per week and just 45% of these directors explained that teachers who are asked to work over 40 hours per week are compensated at one and a half times their regular hourly wage. Another 26% of employers report that their teachers are exempt from overtime requirements, while another 4% reported time off in lieu of additional compensation. Federal wage and hour law requires that non-exempt workers such as early care and education teachers receive time and a half for overtime hours. This law does not apply to public sector employees who may receive time off in lieu of paid compensation. Regardless of setting, 17% of teachers reported that they have worked over 40 hours per week on occasion without receiving any type of compensation or time off.

Profile of the Early Care and Education Workforce

The center-based early care and education workforce in Buncombe County is overwhelmingly female and includes a large proportion of workers who have children of their own. **Table 8** displays data for directors and teaching staff in Buncombe County in 2018 and compares both groups to their statewide counterpart in 2015. Buncombe directors are less likely to be women than was reported statewide in 2015 (84% vs. 95%). Teaching staff in Buncombe County responded similarly to statewide teaching staff with 98% indicating that they are women. Attention should be paid to the difference in percentages between female teaching staff and female directors to ensure that a pattern of promoting/hiring men into leadership roles over women does not occur. Two new choices were added to the Buncombe survey in 2018 allowing respondents to select “non-binary” or “prefer not to answer” for the question on gender. Two percent (2%) of Buncombe directors indicated that they preferred not to answer this question. No directors indicated that they are non-binary. For teachers, 1% indicated that they preferred not to answer with an additional less than 1% specifying that they are non-binary.

**TABLE 8: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ECE WORKFORCE
IN NORTH CAROLINA AND BUNCOMBE COUNTY**

	Statewide Director, 2015	Buncombe Director, 2018	Statewide Teaching Staff, 2015	Buncombe Teaching Staff, 2018
Median Age	47 yrs	49 yrs	38 yrs	36 yrs
Female⁺	95%	84%	99%	98%
People of Color^{**}	44%	6%	47%	21%
Have Children	88%	90%	74%	62%
Single, Sole Support Parent w/Child 0–18	9%	3%	14%	13%
At Least One Child 0–18	48%	57%	48%	46%
Annual Family Income <\$30K	14%	2%	56%	44%

^{**}Includes Asian, African American, Bi-Racial, and American Indian/Native American as well as Latinx

⁺ An additional 2% of directors specified that they would prefer not to answer; An additional 1% of teachers specified that they would prefer not to answer; <1% indicated that they are non-binary

Buncombe County differs significantly from the state in the percentage of both directors and teaching staff who are people of color. Six percent (6%) of directors and 21% of the teaching staff indicated that they are people of color. Statewide, 44% of directors and 47% of the teaching staff indicated that they are people of color. Communities in which directors and teachers closely align with the overall population in terms of race and/or ethnicity provide models of career progression to young children. The total population of Buncombe County is largely non-Hispanic, white (83%).⁹ As such, the teaching staff in child care programs reflects this diversity, however, the leadership in programs falls below the overall population in the county of people of color.

⁹ American Fact Finder, Comparative Demographic Estimates, Table CP05, 2017 ACS 1 year estimate. Wage Rate. Just Economics: <http://bit.ly/wage-rate>, 2018



Buncombe County has a lower percentage of both directors and teachers who live in families with a total family income of less than \$30,000 per year. While only 2% of directors live in this situation, 44% of the teaching staff have a low total family income. Given that nearly 10 years have passed since the Great Recession which ended in 2009, the expectation would be a smaller percentage, specifically of the teaching staff, at this level. At \$30,000 a year, a teacher living in a family of three has earnings of less than 150% of the federal poverty level, low enough to qualify for a number of federal benefits. Further, while Buncombe County does fall below the state average of percentage of families making less than \$30,000 per year, Buncombe County's high cost of living means that a living wage is approximately \$27,000 per year for a single person, according to non-profit Just Economics (*Just Economics*, 2018).¹⁰ Because nearly half (46%) of the teaching staff have at least one child birth through 18, this living wage necessarily would be scaled up.

Many teachers and assistant teachers have children young enough to need child care. Note that programs and services provided by early childhood employers as well other community agencies can be valuable resources for these workers and their families. Examination of the survey data suggests that of the estimated 727 early care and education teachers in Buncombe County, about 22% are estimated to need child care for their own families. Most of these teacher-parents are served by the centers where they work (81%) but about one in five (19%) take their children to another child care center or home. The centers employing them typically provide free or reduced care at the center for these employees' children (74%), but many remain eligible for government assistance for child care. The survey data suggest that just over half (55%) of early care and education staff statewide receive government assistance to help pay for their children's care at work or elsewhere. The dominant source of this payment is from vouchers (92%). The remaining help comes from diverse sources such as NC Pre-K funding, Head Start, and Early Head Start. In addition to the teachers currently served by these programs, others may be eligible and on one of the long waiting lists for subsidy in counties across the state.

Education of the Early Care and Education Workforce

The education of the early care and education workforce has been a critical factor influencing children's early learning opportunities. With the 2015 release of the National Academics of Science report, "Transforming the Workforce for Children From Birth Through Age Eight," it is clearer than ever before that our young children need a well-educated workforce. The report recommends that all lead teachers working with children from birth through age eight have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education as a necessary but not sufficient measure for building quality teachers.¹¹ This section profiles the educational attainment and aspirations of the workforce as expressed in the current survey. See [Table 9](#) for education data on center directors, teachers (teachers and lead teachers), and assistant teachers (assistant teachers, teacher aides, and floaters).

¹⁰Wage Rate. Just Economics: <http://bit.ly/wage-rate>, 2018

¹¹National Academics of Science, "Transforming the Workforce for Children From Birth Through Age Eight." 2015: <http://bit.ly/NAPworkforce>

TABLE 9: EDUCATION OF CENTER DIRECTORS, TEACHERS, AND ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Highest Education Completed	Directors		Teachers		Assistant Teachers	
	Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018	Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018	Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018
Bachelor's Degree or More in ECE/CD	23%	26%	15%	12%	3%	2%
Bachelor's Degree or More in Other Field	37%	47%	22%	28%	12%	18%
Associate Degree in ECE/CD	18%	9%	21%	21%	24%	11%
Associate Degree in Other Field	3%	1%	5%	6%	7%	9%
High School + Any College Courses	19%	16%	36%	31%	44%	45%
High School + Workshops	1%	0%	1%	1%	4%	7%
High School Only	<1%	0%	1%	2%	5%	10%
Less than High School	0%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Other Education Credentials						
N.C. EC Credential	66%	62%	73%	73%	68%	52%
N.C. EC Administration Credential	72%	85%	27%	8%	14%	1%
Child Development Associate (CDA)	6%	7%	10%	11%	11%	5%
B-K/Preschool Add-on License	10%	19%	12%	14%	1%	2%
Educational Pursuits						
Currently Taking ECE/CD Courses	14%	8%	17%	14%	19%	34%

Not surprisingly, center directors have achieved higher levels of education than teachers or assistant teachers, though none of the groups match the minimum education requirements for teachers and administrators in public elementary, middle, and high schools. Standards in North Carolina's rated license system, Head Start and NC Pre-K all require and/or emphasize the addition of early childhood course work. Currently 42% of directors, 37% of teachers, and 13% of assistant teachers have a degree in early childhood education (i.e., AA, BA, or higher). While many others (42% of directors, 29% of teachers, and 27% of assistants) have a degree in a field other than early childhood or child development. Regardless of the level of education or degree obtained, 99% of directors, 94% of teachers and 79% of assistants have taken at least one course in early childhood education. Further, 70% of directors, 54% of teachers and 29% of assistants have taken six or more courses in early childhood education.

The percentage of directors in Buncombe County with a bachelor's degree or more in any field is 74%. Further, nearly a third of the teaching staff (teachers and assistants) of centers (33%) has a degree beyond the associate level. These rates compare to the overall population of Buncombe residents where 39% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.¹²

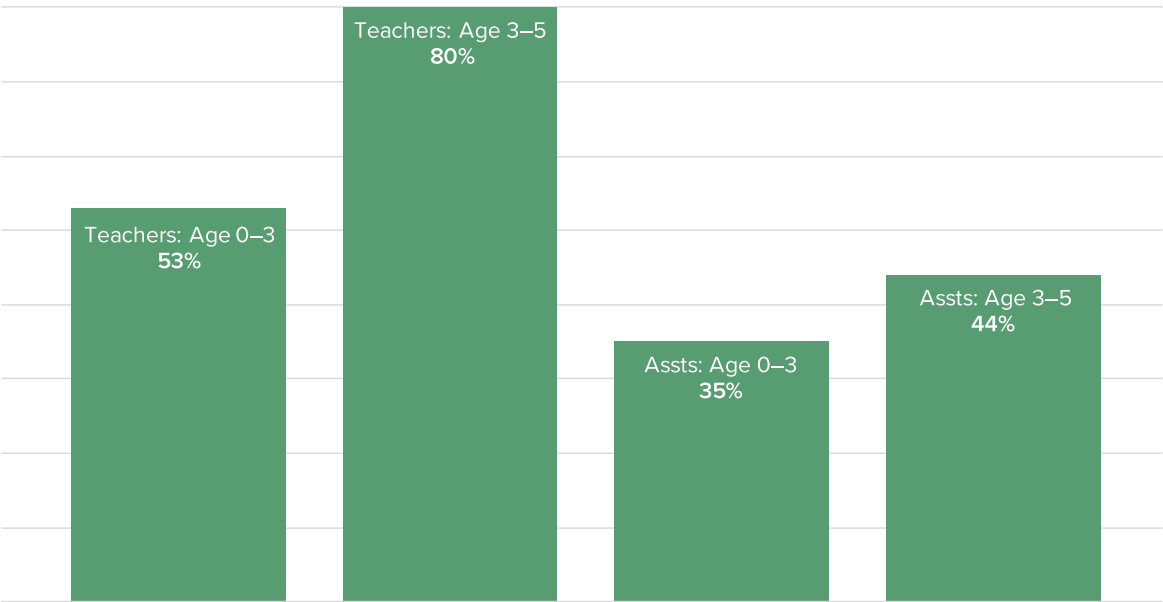
Buncombe County's early care and education workforce has a strong interest in achieving higher levels of education. As shown in the lower half of Table 9, many directors, teachers, and assistant teachers have completed college courses leading to credentials. Furthermore, 14% of the teachers and 34% of assistants said that they were currently taking courses leading to a degree or credential in the early childhood field. Of those taking classes, 40% of teachers and 30% of assistant teachers were working towards an associate degree and 10% of teachers and 22% of assistant teachers were working towards a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 19% of directors, 14% of teachers, and 2% of assistant teachers have a B-K/Preschool add-on Teacher License. In Buncombe County, 8% of teachers and 3% of assistant teachers in school are working towards an infant/toddler certificate thus supporting a national focus on increasing the quality of care for infants and toddlers.



¹² 2019 NC Data Card, NC Child: <http://bit.ly/2019NCDataCard>

EDUCATION OF TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT TEACHERS BY AGE GROUP TAUGHT. Education levels of teachers differ as a group depending on the age of children in their care. Infant and/or toddler teachers (children from birth to 36 months) tend to have lower levels of education than those who teach children three years old or older. See [Figure 2](#). Some teachers indicated that they taught multiple age groups spanning across infant/toddlers and preschoolers (three through five year olds). In these cases, education levels were counted in both age groups. Eighty percent (80%) of those teachers who taught preschoolers (three through five year olds) had at least an associate degree compared to only 53% of those teachers who taught infants and/or toddlers. Similarly among teacher assistants working with preschoolers, 44% had a degree at the AA level or above, whereas only 35% of their peers who worked with infants and/or toddlers had this level of education.

FIGURE 2: PERCENT OF TEACHING STAFF WITH AT LEAST AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE BY AGE GROUP TAUGHT



Earnings of the Early Care and Education Workforce

Workforce earnings in North Carolina remain low. See [Table 10](#). The median self-reported wage of \$12.92 per hour for all child care teachers and lead teachers in Buncombe County does not compare favorably to the starting wage of public school teachers in the County (\$20.21 per hour not including local supplements). The teacher assistant self-reported median of \$11.90 falls slightly below the start of the teacher assistant range in public schools at \$12.12 per hour. With such low earnings for the direct teaching staff, a percentage of the early care and education teaching staff (14% of teachers and 22% of assistant teachers) said that they worked another paid job in addition to their job as a teacher or assistant. See [Table 11](#). The median number of hours worked per week in these additional jobs was 8 for teachers and 13 for assistants.

TABLE 10: SELF-REPORTED EARNINGS OF THE WORKFORCE, 2018

	2018 Wage
90th percentile wage: Teacher & Assistant Teacher	\$17.33
50th percentile wage: Teacher & Assistant Teacher	\$12.50
10th percentile wage: Teacher & Assistant Teacher	\$10.00
90th percentile wage: Director	\$26.14
50th percentile wage: Director	\$21.59
10th percentile wage: Director	\$15.11

Source: 2018 Director and Teacher Surveys

TABLE 11: INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, 2018

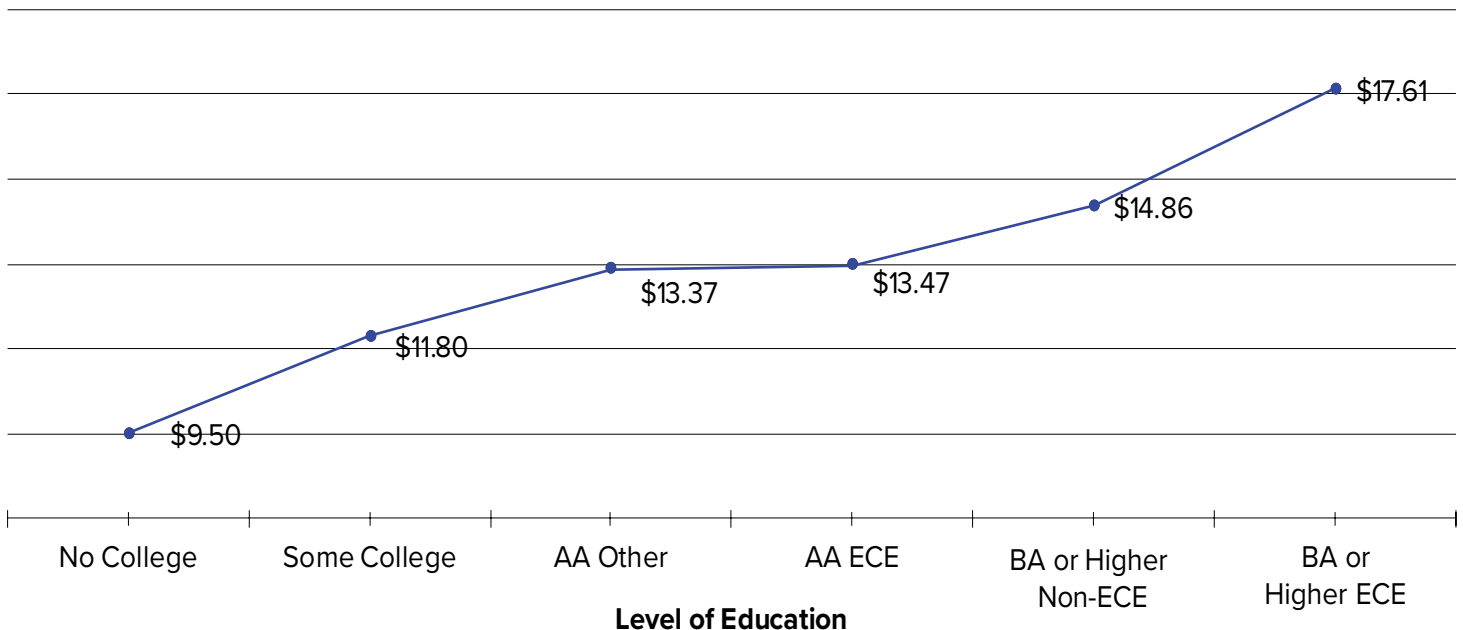
	Teachers	Assistant Teachers
Median Hourly Earnings	\$12.92	\$11.90
Median Household Income	\$35–40K	\$25–30K
Single Parent with Child 0–18	11%	17%
Used Public Assistance in Past 3 Years	39%	34%
Works Another Job	14%	22%
No Health Insurance	23%	22%
Paid Vacations	83%	88%
Paid Holidays	90%	92%

Source: 2018 Teacher Surveys

Child care center directors' self-reported median hourly wage of \$21.59 does compete with that of the starting public school teachers though child care center directors have the added responsibility of running a business and most are not just starting out. Director salaries falls far short of the base salary for public school principals (\$31.73 per hour), however. Assistant Directors median wages in Buncombe County are \$15.30 per hour.

As would be expected, educational level plays a role in teacher and lead teacher wages. *Figure 3* shows, for teachers/lead teachers, the more education, the higher the paycheck. Having at least some college coursework raises salaries by about \$2.30 per hour from having no college coursework. A teacher with an associate degree can expect \$1.57 to \$1.67 per hour more in their paychecks than their counterparts with no degree. Jumping from an associate to a bachelor's degree or higher in a subject other than early childhood education/child development yields a median paycheck that is about \$1.39 more per hour. For those who hold a bachelor's degree or higher in the field of early childhood education, an average \$2.75 more per hour can be expected.

FIGURE 3: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE OF TEACHERS



Previous NC workforce studies have suggested that for the typical teacher, pursuing degrees beyond a bachelor's level in early childhood may not significantly advance wages. In the 2012 survey, teachers with a bachelor's degree in early childhood/child development earned a median salary of \$13.84/hour as opposed to teachers with a master's degree in early childhood/child development who averaged \$13.52/hour. Wage estimates for individuals with master's degrees in prior studies were inconclusive about the value of ECE/CD master's degrees in part because they were based on relatively few cases overall and an especially small number of post-baccalaureate degrees in the early childhood/child development field. However, relatively

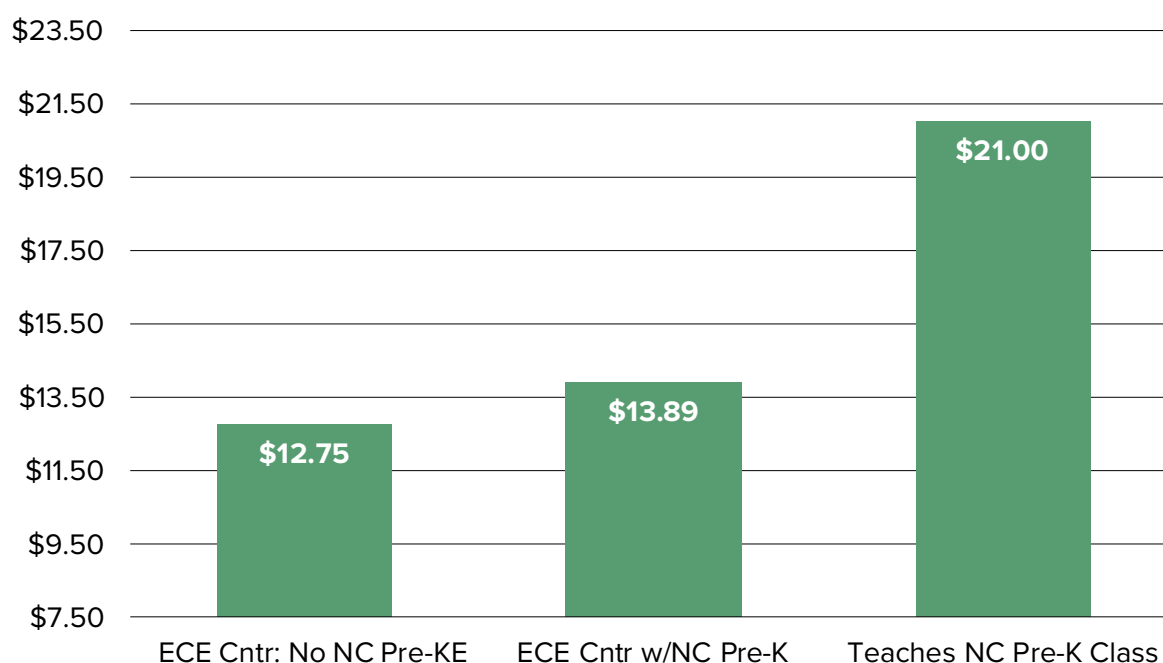
more individuals in the 2013 workforce sample reported both hourly wages and having a master's degree level of education. Further, in the 2014 study, there was even a larger number of individuals reported having ECE/CD master's degrees (N=50) as well as master's degrees in other fields (N=49). These replicate our findings from the 2012 and 2013 studies. In 2015, however, we see a decline in wages for a master's level degree in a field other than early childhood (verses a bachelor's in early childhood) but a gain in a master's degree in the field. The magnitude of the 2015 effects are larger than in previous years, suggesting a real wage premium for those with bachelor's degrees with an early childhood emphasis versus those with a different kind of bachelor's degree, and an even stronger wage premium for those with an early childhood master's versus those with a different type of master's degree. The same pattern holds true in Buncombe County in 2018. There is no increase in wages for a teacher holding a master's degree in a non-ECE field over the wages of a teacher with a bachelor's degree. However, there is a \$6.10 per hour increase for teachers with a master's in early childhood education over teachers with a bachelor's in early childhood education. (Caution should be taken with these figures as only a small number of teachers in Buncombe County have a master's degree in the field. However, the significant gain shows promise.)



For assistant teachers, a clear pattern of wage progression was difficult to ascertain specifically at the higher education levels due to small numbers of assistant teachers holding advanced degrees in the county.

The presence of NC Pre-K is a significant factor in teacher pay. As **Figure 4** demonstrates, for teachers/lead teachers, being in a center with an NC Pre-K classroom and/or teaching in an NC Pre-K classroom increases the opportunity for a larger paycheck. State policy recommends comparable compensation to public schools for those directly in NC Pre-K classrooms, so a higher salary specifically for NC Pre-K classroom teachers is expected. However, there is no such recommendation stated for those in non-NC Pre-K classrooms operated by centers that also have NC Pre-K classrooms. Yet data indicate that there has been a positive impact or “spillover effect” for these teachers/lead teachers as well. Teachers/lead teachers who work in early care and education programs that have an NC Pre-K classroom, but who themselves do not work in that classroom make \$1.14 more per hour than teachers/lead teachers in programs without such a classroom (\$13.89 per hour vs. \$12.75 per hour). For those teachers/lead teachers working in NC Pre-K classrooms as well, their salary is typically over \$7.11 per hour more than their peers who work in centers with an NC Pre-K classroom but who themselves do not actually work in those classrooms (\$21.00 per hour vs. 13.89 per hour).

FIGURE 4: SELF-REPORTED WAGES OF TEACHERS/LEAD TEACHERS IN CENTERS WITH AND WITHOUT NC PRE-K CLASSROOMS, 2018



EARNINGS OF TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT TEACHERS BY AGE GROUP TAUGHT. Teaching three through five year olds proves to be financially beneficial. Teaching staff who only teach three to five year olds can expect approximately 20% higher wages over teaching staff who only teach infants and toddlers. For teachers and lead teachers, those who teach only infants and/or toddlers had a median salary of \$12.48 per hour. Those teachers who taught only preschool children fared better with a median salary of \$15.00 per hour. The same holds true for assistant teachers of infants and/or toddlers who make only \$10.25 per hour compared to their preschool counterparts making \$12.25 per hour. (Many teachers and assistant teachers indicated that they taught multiple age groups spanning across infant and/or toddlers and preschoolers. A similar disparity exists between those who ever teach infants and toddlers and those who never teach infants and toddlers.)



ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

WORKFORCE. Many people working in the early childhood field face severe economic challenges that affect their families and them personally. Overall, the early care and education workforce is at a significant disadvantage economically. About 7% of early care and education teachers and assistant teachers have had to adjust to the loss of family income due to their job loss at some time in the last three years. However, only about a quarter of those (24%) who lost their jobs received unemployment compensation.

But household earnings are not the only indicator of overall economic wellbeing. Additionally, 39% of teachers and 34% of assistant teachers had received some type of public assistance (e.g., Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, child care subsidy) in the previous three years. Statewide in 2015, a similar 39% of teachers/lead teachers and 39% of assistant teachers had received some type of public assistance in the prior three years.

Table 11 breaks down the hard financial burden that teachers and assistant teachers must battle each day. Given the bleak economic climate for teachers and assistant teachers in North Carolina, center directors often find it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. As expected, assistant teachers face more severe economic challenges than do teachers. Hourly wages for assistant teachers remain below that of teachers as do their overall household earnings. To increase their financial situations, a higher percentage of assistant teachers than teachers work a second job.

One bright spot in the situation of the child care workforce is the dramatic improvement in health insurance coverage that seems to have taken place over the last several years. The proportion of the ECE workforce without health insurance has been persistently high, and ECE employers seem to have reduced their extensiveness of work-based coverage offered over the last several years. Statewide, in 2013, over one third of teaching staff at centers (34%) had no health insurance from any source. In Buncombe County in 2018, this percentage was just 23% of teachers and 22% of assistant teachers being uninsured. This is likely due to uptake of insurance through the availability of more options through the Affordable Care Act, and extensive community outreach as well as targeted marketing to the ECE workforce conducted by numerous community agencies in North Carolina. In fact, nearly 1 in 5 teachers and assistants (18%) indicated that they receive insurance either as a result of the Affordable Care Act or that they are on their parents' insurance (which was expanded through the Affordable Care Act).

Professional Support for the Early Care and Education Workforce

Early childhood research has shown that higher education and compensation of early care and education providers can lead to positive outcomes for children. Programs such as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program and salary supplements have addressed some of the educational and financial needs of early care and education providers while lowering staff turnover. At the program level, child care centers offer staff opportunities to develop their teaching skills and professionalism through coursework and by creating a supportive work environment. The workforce survey included a number of questions on these professional support topics.

THE T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® PROGRAM. According to center directors, 65% of centers in North Carolina had at least one staff member that had ever received a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Forty-six percent (46%) of directors reported that they themselves are either currently or have in the past received a scholarship. Although most directors who have never used T.E.A.C.H. themselves did not offer a reason why they did not, the two most frequent responses among those who did were that they didn't qualify (30%) and that they couldn't meet contractual obligations for example, time off, pay raises, etc. (27%).

Among respondents to this year's teacher surveys, a sizable proportion of teachers and assistant teachers (24%) said that they had received a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. When the teaching staff is broken down, 25% percent of teachers and 22% or assistant teachers report receiving T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® support. The main reasons cited for not participating in T.E.A.C.H. were: don't know enough about it (27%), don't know why I don't participate (14%), and not going to school (12%). Most directors (91%) voiced support for T.E.A.C.H. by indicating that they do not limit the number of teachers receiving the scholarship. From the director's perspective, the two most cited reasons why their teachers have never participated in T.E.A.C.H. are that they are not going to school (38%) and they haven't applied (30%).

Data from the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program indicate that the Program is working to increase the education levels of child care providers.¹³ Evaluation data show that 50% of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® participants were not working on a degree before they learned about the Program. Of those, 80% indicated they could not afford the cost of higher education. For Program participants, nearly two thirds indicated that they are more satisfied with their jobs (64%). Nearly as many, 57%, said that participation in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program has made them more willing to stay with their current early care and education program.

In any given year, nearly 50% of T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients are people of color. The widespread availability of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships has helped raise the qualifications of the workforce and has potentially contributed to the increasing percentage of people of color in center leadership positions.

SALARY SUPPLEMENTS. Among Buncombe County teachers and assistant teachers, 40% reported that they had received a salary supplement funded by Smart Start at some point in their careers. This included 48% of teachers and 25% of assistant teachers. According to recent Child Care WAGE\$® information,¹⁴ the mean six month supplement for all participants in Buncombe County in FY2018 was \$897. Buncombe County is a Tier 1 County with an \$18 salary cap. The newly created Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ Program funds eligible infant and/or toddler teachers a higher supplement that is comparable to Tier 2 in the Child Care WAGE\$® program. This program is available to teaching staff in Buncombe County, but only to those who work full-time with infants and/or toddlers. According to FY18 participant evaluations, ninety-seven percent (97%) of participants in the program indicate that WAGE\$ has encouraged them to stay in their current program. Further, 96% say that the program helps them feel more satisfied with their job and 99% say that WAGE\$ supplements help ease financial stress.



Child Care WAGE\$® not only provides benefits for participants. Directors also realize the benefits with 76% indicating that the program increases morale and 63% specifying that lower turnover is a benefit. Finally, 68% of directors cite Child Care WAGE\$® encouraged staff to seek more education.¹⁵ Salary supplement amounts were not included in the calculation of individual respondent hourly wages.

OTHER CENTER-PROVIDED SUPPORT. Child care centers can support the professional development of staff without creating a significant financial burden on their programs. Eight key types of professional support that centers can provide staff are an orientation to the child care program, written job descriptions, written personnel policies, paid tuition expenses, paid workshop/conference fees, paid breaks, compensatory time for training, and paid preparation or planning time. See [Table 12](#). Buncombe County centers understand the importance of providing support to their teachers. All programs indicate that they offer at least two of these low cost benefits with most (85%) offering five or more of these supports. Nearly all offer their employees written personnel policies (96%), an orientation (95%) and written job descriptions (92%). Many pay workshop fees and/or conference registration (88%) and offer compensation or paid time off to attend these training events (80%). About three-fourths (77%) paid for preparation or planning time. Two-thirds (67%) pay for breaks. Finally, 61% pay for tuition expenses of their employees. Offering a more professional work environment may be a low-cost means for centers to reduce staff turnover.

¹³ 2017–2018 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Program annual evaluation data.

¹⁴ 2017–2018 Child Care WAGE\$ Program information.

¹⁵ 2017–2018 Child Care WAGE\$ Program annual evaluation data.

TABLE 12: PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT BENEFITS IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

Type of Professional Supports	Buncombe County 2018
Written Personnel Policies	96%
Orientation	95%
Workshop Fees/Conference Registration	88%
Compensation or Paid Time Off For Training	80%
Paid Preparation/Planning Time	77%
Paid Breaks	67%
Tuition Expenses	61%
Numbers of Professional Supports Provided	2018
0–3	7%
4	9%
5+	85%

Source: 2018 Directors Surveys

Experience and Turnover of the Child Care Workforce

Young children need experienced, well-educated teachers with whom they can form close attachments over time. These attributes are even more important for teachers of infants and toddlers. Buncombe County has a combination of seasoned child care professionals who have remained with their current programs for years as well as some less-experienced providers who have either just begun in the field or in a new child care program. Across the county, median length of experience in the child care field was 22.0 years for directors, 11.0 years for teachers, and 6.0 years for assistant teachers. Directors have been in the field for between four years and two months and 45 years. Teachers have a larger range of time in the field, from one month to 45 years. Assistants have been in the field from one month to 35 years. Further, about 23% of teachers and 31% of assistant teachers reported having worked at their center for less than a year (see [Table 13](#)).

TABLE 13: ECE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE

Center Based Staff	Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018
Teachers Years in Current Center	3.6	2.8
Teachers with less than 1 Year in Current Center	19%	23%
Teachers Years in Child Care Field	11.5	11.0
Assistant Teachers Years in Current Center	2.5	2.0
Assistant Teachers with less than 1 Year in Current Center	29%	31%
Assistant Teachers Years in Child Care Field	8.0	6.0
Directors Years in Current Position in Center	6.4	5.3
Directors Years in Child Care Field	18.0	22.0

Source: Directors and Teacher Surveys in 2015 and 2018

Directors' median years in their positions in their centers was 5.3 years with a range of one month to 37 years. With a median of 2.8 years in their program, teachers have been in their programs anywhere from one month to 35 years. The median number of years teacher assistants have been in their programs is 2.0 years with a range of one month to 32 years.

The current survey included data which can be used in two different measures of turnover: (1) for center-based teachers, the percentage of child care teachers and assistant teachers who left their centers during the previous year and (2) for individual directors, teachers, and assistant teachers, the percentage of workers who are planning to leave the child care field in the next three years. An aggregate separation rate can be constructed by summing the number of staff reported by center directors

as working in their centers and dividing into the number they reported as having left employment in the previous year. See [Table 14](#). As a proportion of the population of full-time teachers and assistants in the County, 27% left their centers during the previous 12 months. The separation rate for full time teachers was 28% and for full time assistants was 25%.

TABLE 14: ECE WORKFORCE TURNOVER

	Statewide 2015	Buncombe 2018
Full-time Teachers and Assistant Teachers	18%	27%
Full-time Teachers	19%	28%
Full-time Assistant Teachers	13%	25%
Teachers Leaving the Field in 3 Years	19%	32%
Assistant Teachers Leaving the Field in 3 Years	21%	28%
Infant/Toddler Teachers/Assistants Leaving the Field in 3 Years	21%	31%
Preschool Teachers/Assistants Leaving the Field in 3 Years	17%	28%
Directors Leaving the Field in 3 Years	12%	6%

Source: Statewide Directors and Teacher Surveys, 2015; Buncombe Director and Teacher Surveys, 2018



These same data can be used to calculate center specific separation rates. These rates varied substantially across centers. Eighteen percent (18%) of centers reported that they had no full-time staff turnover during the previous year while 22% of centers had turnover at or above 100% of current full-time staff.

Nearly one in three teachers (32%) said that they plan to leave the field in the next three years. For assistant teachers, the rate was slightly lower at 28%. Directors, however, were somewhat less likely to say that they plan on leaving the field in the next three years at 6%.

EXPERIENCE AND TURNOVER BY AGE GROUP TAUGHT. Not surprisingly, when controlling for age group taught, preschool teachers and assistant teachers show slightly more experience both in their centers and in the field as a whole compared with infant and/or toddler teachers.

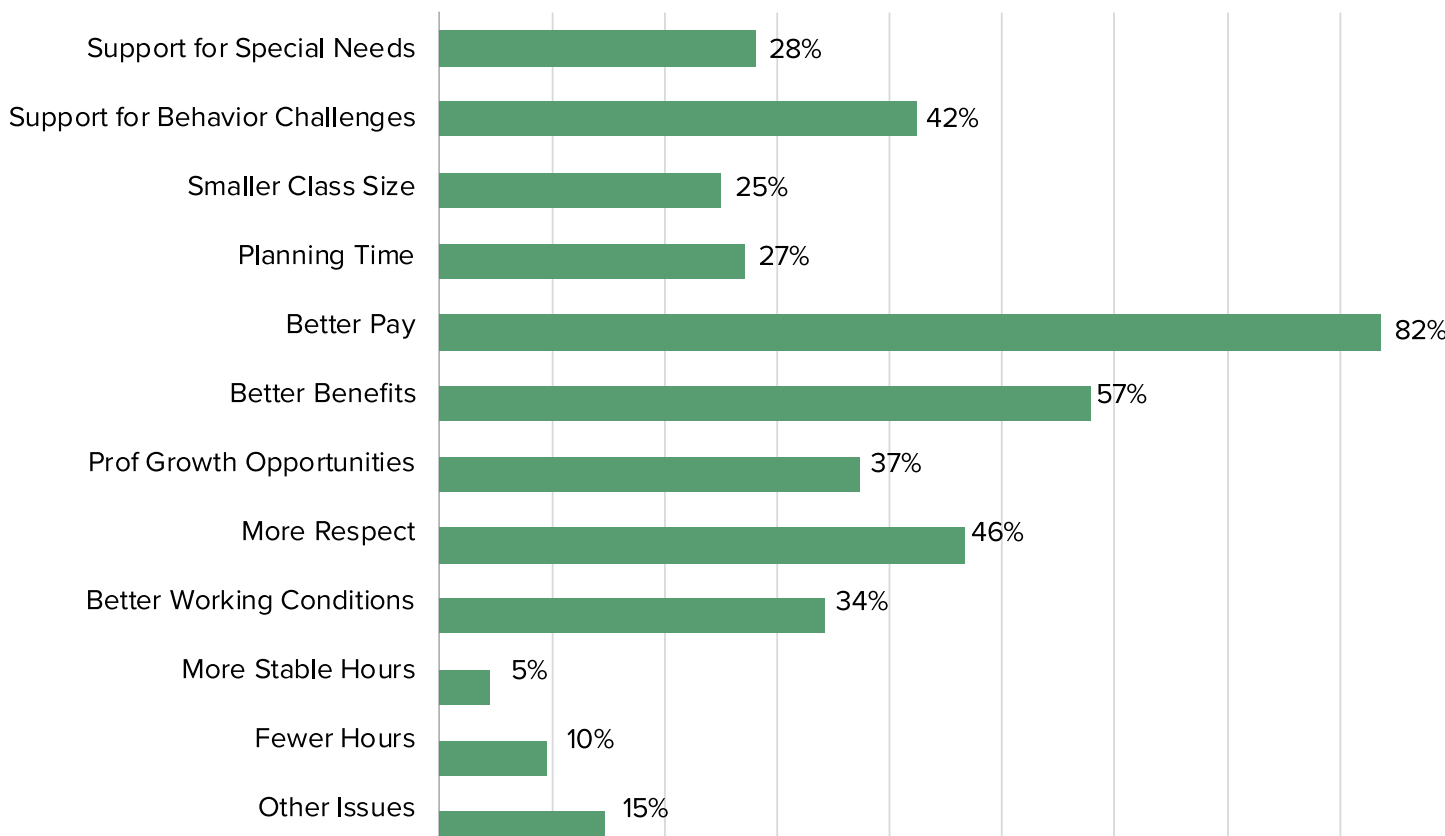
When asked if they would be leaving the field within three years, 28% of preschool teaching staff answered in the affirmative. For infant and/or toddler teaching staff, nearly one in three (31%) responded that they may not be in the field in three years. During this early period of development (8 months to 2 years), many young children go through a period of stranger anxiety, which can only be exacerbated by staff churning.

Teachers of preschool children typically had been employed by their programs for 4.0 years, and had been in the field for 11.0 years. For assistant teachers working with preschoolers, median years working in their current center with preschoolers was 3.2 although they reported having been in the child care field for a median of 7.5 years. The profile for teaching staff working with infants and/or toddlers suggested less employment stability. One third (33%) of the teachers of this youngest age group have been in their programs for less than a year with a median of 2.3 years in their current program, although typically they report having been in the field for 10.4 years. A similar profile is found for assistant teachers in this age group. Nearly a half (45%) have worked in their center for less than a year with a median of 1.0 years in their current program, although they have had a median 2.0 years in the field as a whole. (It should be noted that although some teachers and assistant teachers indicated that they taught multiple age groups spanning across infant and/or toddlers and preschoolers, most of those who taught one group regularly did not teach the other group. In the cases where there was overlap in ages taught, experience and turnover were counted in both age groups.)

WORKFORCE RETENTION. Survey respondents who indicated that they planned to leave the field within three years were then asked what would make them stay in the field. Directors who are not planning to be in the field in three years were asked to provide insight into what would make them stay. The 6% of directors planning to leave the field did not take the opportunity to expand on what factors would make them stay.

Teaching staff were more forthcoming in voicing factors that might keep them in the field. Some motivators that might help teachers and assistants stay in the field include higher pay, which was listed as the top motivator with 82% of the teaching staff who plan to leave the field naming this factor as one that might entice them to stay. See [Figure 5](#). Better benefits were listed by 57% of the teaching staff as important for their remaining in the early care and education field. More respect for the important work they do (46%) and more support for working with children with challenging behaviors (42%) were also named by teaching staff as important motivators. Finally, having more opportunities for professional growth (37%) and better working conditions (34%) was also identified by approximately one in three teaching staff considering leaving as something that might make them stay.

FIGURE 5: FACTORS MOTIVATING TEACHING STAFF TO STAY IN THE FIELD, 2018



CONCLUSION

Progress continues to be made in the education of the early care and education workforce in North Carolina, including in Buncombe County. The profession continues to show slow, but steady progress in a number of areas, including degree attainment and wages. When the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant application was submitted in the fall of 2011, one of the lofty NC goals set forth in the application was that “47% of lead teachers/teachers working with children from birth through five in licensed child care, Head Start, or Pre-K settings will have an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education or its equivalent or a Bachelor’s degree in Child Development alone or with a BK license or its equivalent”. Buncombe County has far surpassed this goal with 67% of their teachers having completed an associate degree or higher. However, only one third (33%) of those degrees are in Early Childhood Education or Child Development. Assistant teachers have obtained an Associate degree more infrequently, at 40%. Only 13% of those degrees are in Early Childhood Education or Child Development. Similar educational progress can be found in the education of center directors in the county, with 83% now having either a two or four year degree, slightly higher than the statewide average of 81%.

Teaching staff in Buncombe County are slightly more likely to be uninsured than the state as a whole. In 2015 statewide, about one-fifth of the workforce was uninsured. Of those surveyed in Buncombe County in 2018, 23% of teachers and 22% of assistant teachers stated they were uninsured. Examining centers who do provide health insurance in Buncombe County reveal large disparities based on auspice. On one end of the spectrum, just 17% of single-site for-profit centers provide employee health insurance. On the other end, 100% of Head Start and public school sponsored centers provide their employees with at least partly paid health insurance. Providing these benefits supports the health and wellness of the workforce in an industry where there is high exposure to both infectious diseases and workplace injuries.

On the compensation side, compared to statewide figures, wages paid to early childhood teachers in Buncombe County surpass those of the state as a whole. In 2015, statewide early childhood teachers earned an average of \$10.97 an hour. In Buncombe County in 2018, teachers earned an average of \$12.92 an hour, almost \$2.00 an hour more in earnings. Assistant teachers earned an average of \$11.90 per hour in the county. Given the higher cost of living in Buncombe County, higher wages for early care and education professionals than the state would be expected. However, with a living wage of approximately \$13.00 per hour, many teachers and assistant teachers earn below this amount.¹⁶ Further, from 2015 to 2018 no significant reduction occurred in the high percent of the teaching workforce (39%) that consistently relies on one or more forms of public assistance to make ends meet. This stagnation is happening even while the workforce education levels continue to rise. Considering this high economic anxiety, it is not surprising that the 2018 Buncombe County survey showed 14% of teachers and 22% of assistant teachers work another job to supplement their income and make ends meet.

Disparity exists not only for the workforce; but also plays out viscerally for our young children. For example, the lowest median wage for a teacher starts at \$9.75 per hour at a private for-profit multi-center site. The highest median starting wage for a teacher is more than twice that rate at \$20.21 per hour at a public school. The median highest teacher wages also show great disparities ranging from \$13.25 per hour in private for-profit (both single and multi-center) and private not-for-profit (sponsored by a faith community) to \$36.63 per hour in public schools. Low and stagnant wages play out in teacher turnover with more than one in four leaving their centers within three years in Buncombe County. The overwhelming strategy teachers report would keep them in their classroom is better wages with 82% of respondents in the county listing this as their top motivator. This turnover has a direct, negative impact on young children, their attachments with adults in their lives and their own well-being in their child care arrangement. This high level of turnover can force child care centers to hire less qualified teachers, thus impacting the education children receive. In order to minimize this turnover and increase the quality of early care and education in the state, and in Buncombe County specifically, teachers' should be appropriately compensated for the important work they do. In addition to lowering turnover, concentrated efforts to increase wages and benefits could motivate more young people to enter the early childhood workforce confident of making a good living, while improving the quality of care young children receive.

Teachers know that programs pay very different wages and are taking their own steps to pursue fair compensation. So while the high turnover rate in programs has had little variability over this period, the longevity of teachers and directors in the early care and education profession continues to lengthen. This longevity in the field coupled with increased educational credentials are indicators of the development of a real professional workforce. Similarly, subsidy rate increases may have contributed to higher compensation over the past year. Centers are also experiencing better enrollments as the economy has picked up. But with wages not reflecting the large educational gains, now is the time to tackle the challenge of workforce compensation in earnest. Without new and strategic investments, Buncombe County, and the rest of the state of North Carolina, may experience a resurgence of higher turnover rates and the loss of its better educated teachers in its licensed and higher star settings. Better paying jobs in other industries may be a significant enticement without the compensation and recognition the workforce deserves.

Considering that child poverty has been on the decline and degree attainment for ECE professionals is at an all-time high, now is the time to fight for fair compensation to insure that both these trends continue for Buncombe County. The relationship between supportive early relationships and life success has long been established, and these relationships can only form if teachers have the adequate resources, health, education, and time to cultivate them. As research by James Heckman and others points out, for every dollar spent on high quality early care and education programs, communities can expect a 7% to 13% return on investment. This investment in "comprehensive birth to five early childhood education is a powerful and cost-effective way to mitigate [child poverty's] negative consequence on child development and adult opportunity."¹⁷

¹⁶Wage Rate. Just Economics: <http://bit.ly/wage-rate>

¹⁷"The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program." Garcia, J.L., Heckman, J., Leaf, D.E., Prados, M.J. 2016: heckmanequation.org.

APPENDIX A

Survey Methods and Response Rates for 2018 Survey

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS: The written and online versions of the questionnaires used in this survey were based on the forms for child care center directors, and teachers previously created and used by the authors of this study. The questionnaires were modified to include currently relevant and time-sensitive items. Additional changes were made to reflect the needs of the funder. There were two separate instruments: (1) a director's survey which was intended for directors of early care and education programs; (2) a teaching staff survey which was provided to teachers and teachers' assistants in those programs whose directors participated in the study.

The objective of weighting these survey data is to obtain a reasonably accurate estimate of the characteristics of an overall population of early childhood programs, their directors, and their teaching staff based on data obtained from a sample of directors of ECE programs and teaching staff through surveys that they provided to CCSA. The overall study design identified a list of qualified ECE centers (not including child care homes) that was constructed based on information provided by the North Carolina Licensing Section of the NC DHHS. This listing included not only contact information, but other information as well. Data included the size of the program, number of teaching staff (i.e., teachers and assistant teachers), the organizational form, and a number of other characteristics. Because the sampling frame contains so much information, assessing the extent of non-response bias for information about the program and the directors is relatively straightforward.

In the case of CCSA workforce surveys, assessing the representativeness of surveys from teaching staff is compounded by the fact that no exhaustive listing of teachers in a jurisdiction exists—although information on the licensing database allows CCSA to estimate the *number* of teaching staff for various age groups. It is possible that these data under or over-count or actual full- and part-time teachers working at the center at the time of the survey. Hence, CCSA relies on center directors to enumerate the actual number of teaching staff they employ (both on a full-time and part-time basis), report this number to CCSA, identify the qualifying teachers individually, and distribute surveys to those individual teachers. This two-stage sampling process—in which the director is in effect a gatekeeper for the teaching staff surveys—makes it difficult to identify potential sources of bias and to estimate extent of bias that might be introduced in the measurement of various teacher characteristics. This is an important additional rationale for adjusting estimates through the use of teaching staff level weights.

SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES: To begin the study, all centers who serve children birth to five with a valid email address on file with the Division of Child Development and Early Education in July 2018 were sent an online survey uniquely linked to their email address. Several reminder emails were sent and phone calls were made to remind center directors to check their emails and respond to the surveys. For programs with no email addresses and for those programs who failed to respond after numerous attempts through email, phone calls were made in an attempt to conduct the surveys over the phone.

Following numerous phone attempts, non-responding programs were either sent a packet in the mail or had packets hand delivered by the Buncombe Partnership for Children. Center packets included a cover letter, questionnaire and postage-paid return envelope for the director; cover letter, questionnaire and postage-paid return envelope for each teacher/assistant teacher to be surveyed, and raffle tickets and small thank you gifts for the director and teachers.

For programs in which the director had completed the survey either online or by phone, packets were sent/delivered that included a cover letter for the director and a small thank you gift. Also included were enough surveys for each teacher and assistant teacher, postage-paid return envelopes, raffle tickets and small gifts.

To ensure a high survey response rate, repeated email reminders, phone calls and mailings were made to child care centers to remind and assist participants in responding. When requested, mailings were faxed to programs. Staff also asked each participating program to confirm the number of full- and part-time teachers and assistant teachers who were included in ratios for children birth to five. This number was used to help estimate the teachers' participation rate.

CALCULATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL WEIGHTS: The Buncombe Country sampling frame consisted of 79 qualifying centers. Surveys were sent to all centers, and 56 center directors (or 71%) responded to the survey. If all types of centers were equally well represented, weighting would not be necessary. However, this situation rarely happens in surveys, so weighting is used to adjust for differential response of centers with different kinds of characteristics.

A number of characteristics of the ECE centers were examined from publicly available data. We chose to focus on four specific characteristics that had been found to be relevant to center level response rates in previous statewide surveys conducted by CCSA. These were **size, sponsorship, star rating level, and presence of an NC pre-K classroom**. In a small survey such as this one, there is an elevated risk of “over correcting” by using too many variables to classify the cells. Hence, we sought to use only the most important independent predictors of response in our weighting scheme.

SIZE was measured by several quantities: licensed capacity (i.e., number of children that could be served legally), current enrollment, or size of teaching staff. These measures were strongly inter-correlated, but the primary measure of current enrollment used to measure size was the number of children enrolled as recorded on the license. **Organizational sponsorship** included several descriptors of organizational ownership status, which were collapsed into three categories: for-profit, not-for-profit, and government sponsored. The next relevant characteristic was **star rating** which consisted of one star [N=7]; three stars [N= 8], four stars [N=13] five stars [N=44]or one of several categories of exempt (GS-110)[N=4], provisional [N=1], or temporary status [N=2]. These were collapsed into three categories: five star, four star, and all other. This process grouped together those with 1 to 3 stars along with those which were exempt or had provisional licenses and recoded to have the same value designation. Finally, the presence of a NC Pre-K classroom in the program was identified by matching the surveys and sampling frame to a list of all centers in the state with a NC Pre-K classroom.

In order to determine which specific variables should be used in the stratification process we used a two stage process. First we examined the bivariate relationship between each of the potential stratification variables and the dependent variable of survey response (1= yes; 0=no). The second stage involved using a stepwise multiple regression model to disentangle the correlated independent variables, and to determine which of the four variables used actually made a difference independently in predicting survey response

In the first stage we found that non-profit sponsorship was associated with a higher response rate and that response rates of the other two types of sponsorship did not differ from each other. Consequently we categorized ECE centers as “nonprofit” (=1) versus other (=0). We also examined the bivariate relationship between size and response and found a significant difference in response rate by size categories, so we used the four categories as a quantitative variable (1,2,3,4). We also found that star rating correlated positively with response and NC Pre-K site status also correlated negatively with response. Not surprisingly NC Pre-K status correlated positively with Star Rating Level because all NC Pre-K Sites were in higher level star rating centers. Further, NC Pre-K status is correlated with sponsorship as a disproportionate number of government and non-profit sponsored programs are sites for NC Pre-K classrooms.

In the next stage of the analysis we employed a multivariate regression model using backward stepwise elimination in order to reduce the number of predictor variables enabling a parsimonious algorithm for the construction of weights. The results are displayed in [Table 1](#).

TABLE 1A: RESULTS OF BACKWARD STEPWISE ELIMINATION MODEL

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1a	W_Auspice_NonProfit	1.694	.841	4.057	1	.044	5.443
	w_Star_3_lvls	.925	.385	5.757	1	.016	2.521
	NC_PreKSite	-1.972	.836	5.559	1	.018	.139
	W_size_ord_4	-.278	.226	1.513	1	.219	.757
Step 2a	W_Auspice_NonProfit	1.476	.806	3.353	1	.067	4.376
	w_Star_3_lvls	.544	.201	7.314	1	.007	1.723
	NC_PreKSite	-1.523	.710	4.606	1	.032	.218

TABLE 1B: MODEL FIT STATISTICS BACKWARD STEPWISE ELIMINATION MODEL

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
82.125a	.293	.391
82.212a	.292	.390

The three variables remaining in the equation in Table 1a reveal a positive tendency to respond to the survey associated with non-profit sponsorship and Star Rating Level, and a negative tendency to respond associated with centers which have a NC PreK classroom. The combined explained variance in the equation is reported in Table 1b. This figure is nearly 40%, suggesting that this model is quite useful in understanding what structural factors account for respondents not replying to the survey. Based on these results we chose to stratify the population as a cross tabulation of these three predictor variables.

The results of that cross-tabulation are shown in Table 2. Each stratum is represented by 3 different stratum characteristics: 1) nonprofit status (NO=0 or YES=1); 2) Star rating level (0 through 3, 4 stars, or 5 stars); 3) presence of a NC Pre-K classroom on site (NO=0 or YES=1). In the next three columns of the table, the total number of cases in the population of Buncombe County [N = 79] are distributed across the strata, as are the centers with survey responses [N=56], and centers which did not respond to the survey [N=23]. Finally the next two columns in the table display for each stratum the Response Rate [Responding Centers divided by Total Centers expressed as a percentage] and the Stratum Weight [Total Centers divided by Responding Center which is also the inverse of response rate]. The table can be checked by multiplying each of the stratum weights by the number responding centers in the corresponding stratum and summing across all the strata. The sum will be 79 which is the total number of qualifying centers in the Buncombe county sampling frame. This sum will typically be the result for all data item whenever weights are applied to the file and when data are complete. If cases have missing values for a particular variable, the weighted sum across all cases will be less than 79.

By examining this table it is evident that only nine of the 12 possible combinations of the three stratum defining variables are actually found in the population of centers. This is not surprising as NC Pre-K centers will not be found in programs with 3 or fewer stars. Secondly, in the case of five of the nine cells, 100% of eligible centers responded, which will make estimates for these cells equal to the actual population measure. Thirdly, all of the four remaining cells yielded response rates that are 50% or greater. This situation enables us to calculate center level survey weights which are both highly reliable and generally stable.

TABLE 2: RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS AND SURVEY WEIGHTS BY STRATUM

Stratum Number	Stratum Characteristics			Survey Response			Stratum Response Rate	Stratum Weight
	Non-profit Status	STAR Level	NC PreK at site	Total [N=79]	YES [N=56]	NO [N=23]		
1=000	NO	0–3 Stars	NO	17	10	7	58.8%	1.70
2=010	NO	4 Star	NO	6	3	3	50.0%	2.00
3=020	NO	5 Star	NO	11	11	0	100.0%	1.00
4=021	NO	5 Star	YES	22	11	11	50.0%	2.00
5=100	YES	0–3 Stars	NO	5	5	0	100.0%	1.00
6=110	YES	4 Star	NO	6	4	2	66.7%	1.50
7=111	YES	4 Star	YES	1	1	0	100.0%	1.00
8=120	YES	5 Star	NO	9	9	0	100.0%	1.00
9=121	YES	5 Star	YES	2	2	0	100.0%	1.00

CALCULATION OF TEACHING STAFF LEVEL WEIGHTS: There were 277 cases of teaching staff survey responses. In order to estimate the overall probability of response of the teaching staff in Buncombe County, we need to know the actual number of teachers in each ECE program as well as the total number in the county. We can estimate that by summing the numbers of cases in each program across all 79 centers in the county. We can get those numbers—which we take to be the best current source—from data provided by the directors of ECE programs either in their surveys or from data collected directly by CCSA research staff via direct inquiries. Using these data we estimate the total number of teaching staff in Buncombe County to be 727. This number is almost 13% larger than is the estimated that would be derived had we estimated the numbers for the county based only on the state license data. Thus the crude response rate for the teaching staff surveys is around 38% (277/727). This suggests that the typical teaching staff survey case represents on average about 2.62 teaching staff members in the entire population. However, actual weights for individual cases will vary widely as explained below. In those programs where the directors returned their surveys, multiple efforts were made to secure surveys from their teaching staff and usable surveys were returned by 244 of those teachers and assistant teachers out of an estimated 534 in the participating centers.



This yields a response rate of 46% of teachers in those programs where center and director data is available.

In order to construct individual level weights for each teacher, we first calculated a preliminary weight by dividing the number of teaching staff working in a center by the number of teaching staff that returned a survey from that center, and applied that quantity to each survey from each program. These preliminary weights ranged from 1.00 (in cases where all teaching staff at a given program answered their survey) to 11.00 where only one of 11 teachers answered. The mean up-weight for an individual teacher was 2.01, while the median was 1.59. Of course, there were some centers where no teaching staff returned a survey and these are dealt with below

The next step was to adjust the preliminary weights by a factor that accounts for the differential probability of response associated with the probability of an ECE program being represented in the sample because of directors' responses. This was done by multiplying preliminary individual teacher weight by the center weight and yielded a meaningful result in 244 of the 277 cases. For the remaining 33 teaching staff cases where surveys were not obtained from directors (N= 13 centers) a weight of 1.0 was substituted for the center level weight. Finally, there were only 10 ECE centers where neither teacher nor director surveys were returned. Although we have no way of verifying this, we make the assumption that the organizational level weighting procedure will correct for the non-response of directors and teachers in these few centers.

In a subsequent step the weights described above were applied to the teaching staff dataset and an estimate of total number of teachers in Buncombe County was derived by summing across all of these 277

weighted cases. This yielded a weighted estimate of workforce size in Buncombe County that was about 10% larger than the more accurate estimate derived earlier of 727. The final weight (weight_6) was derived by rescaling this quantity downward so that the count level estimate adds up to the 727. This weight has been used in most analysis of teaching staff. In order to test the effect of teaching staff level weighting on estimates of key variables, we have provided some data estimates which compare key demographic variables in the Appendix. Review of these tables suggest that weighted estimates differ slightly from unweighted estimates in generally expected ways but that rarely are the differences more than a few percentage points.

WEIGHTING CONCLUSION: Survey weights for ECE Centers and Teaching staff in Buncombe County North Carolina were constructed for the 2018–2019 Early Childhood Workforce study conducted by Child Care Services Association, using generally accepted methods for adjusting for survey non-response. Users of these weights should be aware that they are of use only in the estimating measures of central tendency or percentage values of variables. Further, measures of dispersion (i.e., standard errors, standard deviations) generated by most statistical software (e.g., SPSS) applied to a weighted dataset will typically yield inaccurate or unreliable results. These inaccuracies can be minimized by the use of specialized software add-on packages specifically designed and tested for use in weighted survey sampling designs.

Despite the design challenges necessitated by a two-stage survey design, reasonably robust estimates of the characteristics of ECE workforce and ECE programs can be expected using these weights. CCSA's well developed methods facilitated the construction of sampling weights. Of particular importance were CCSA's processes of: (1) refining the sampling frame derived from NC DCDEE licensing data; (2) supplementing this sampling frame with primary data collection on the number and characteristics of teaching staff; (3) using a variety of implementation techniques to obtain high levels of response from both directors and teaching staff survey respondents.

APPENDIX B

Definitions of Terms

- **CHILD CARE CENTERS:** An arrangement where, at any one time, there are three or more preschool-age children or nine or more school-age children receiving care. (from Child Care Center Handbook produced by the Division of Child Development and Early Education, 2009). Centers may be found in community buildings, churches or synagogues, buildings built specifically for child care, in private homes or in public buildings.
- **CHILD CARE WAGES® PROGRAM:** This program provides salary supplements that are linked to the education level of participants and are paid every six months as long as participants remain in the same child care program (www.childcare-services.org).
- **DEGREE:** Either an associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree or Ph.D. from an institute of higher learning.
- **DEGREE IN ECE:** An associate, bachelor's, master's or Ph.D. in either early childhood education or child development.
- **DEGREE IN OTHER:** An associate, bachelor's, master's or Ph.D. in a field of study other than early childhood education or child development.
- **FOR-PROFIT CENTERS:** Child care centers ranging from single-classroom facilities consisting of a multi-age group of children and one teacher/director to multi-site facilities enrolling hundreds of children and employing a director, assistant director, lead teachers and assistant teachers that are operated as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or corporations with the goal of making a profit for their owner or stockholders.
- **MEDIAN:** One of three measures of central tendency; the number representing the case which has equal cases above and below it. Throughout this report, "average" is used interchangeably with "median."
- **NC PRE-K:** A community-based education initiative designed to prepare at-risk four-year-olds in North Carolina for success in school. Pre-kindergarten classrooms operate for the school day and school year and are provided in diverse settings such as public and private schools, Head Start centers, and community-based child care centers and preschools (<http://bit.ly/NCDHHS-providers>).
- **NON-PROFIT CENTERS:** Child care centers operated by a board of directors that govern the program, that is mission-driven and not operated with a goal of making a profit. These programs may be sponsored by community or faith-based organizations. Includes programs with a Notice of Compliance (GS-110) as well as centers with a star-rated license.
- **PEOPLE OF COLOR:** People who self identify as Asian, African-American, bi-racial, or American Indian/Native American.
- **PUBLIC (SPONSORED PROGRAMS):** Head Start sites, public school sponsored and other publicly funded programs.
- **STAR RATED LICENSE SYSTEM:** North Carolina's Star Rated License System awards stars to child care programs based on how well they are doing in providing quality child care. Child care programs receive a rating of one to five stars. A rating of one star means that a child care program meets North Carolina's minimum licensing standards for child care. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a 2- to 5-star license (<http://bit.ly/NCDHHS-parent-info>).
- **T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD®:** This program provides comprehensive educational scholarships that help pay the cost of tuition, books, and travel, and may insure paid release time, require compensation incentives and encourage retention for child care providers working on a credential or degree in early childhood education or child development (www.childcare-services.org).

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The Buncombe County Partnership for Children for funding this study.

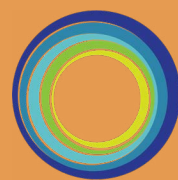
Dr. Thomas Konrad for performing the data weighting.

The child care providers in Buncombe County who participated in the study and who have dedicated themselves to the young children in the county.

For more information about the 2018 Buncombe County Workforce Study, please contact the Research Department at Child Care Services Association at (919) 967-3272.

This study was managed and co-authored by CCSA staff Mary Martin, Takeasia McArn, Joy Turner, and Allory Bors.





Buncombe
Partnership
for Children

a partner in the
smart start network



published July 2019

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Partnership for Children	Project Name:	Child Care Resources: Professional and Systems
COVID-19 Response:			
<p>We plan to move forward with the activities included in the application. We anticipate a decrease in the travel budget with consultants providing technical assistance and coaching via phone and zoom, which could be offset by an increase in trainer fees and offering the Reconnect for Resilience training series, which costs more to offer than our standard trainings.</p>			
Response to Committee Questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aren't there additional ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your training programs, other than just asking the participants if they learned something new? <p>All trainings go through an extensive approval process from DCDEE that show alignment with NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Hiring practices assure that trainers are skilled in adult learning theory. DCDEE requires a standard participant assessment survey to be used with all training/professional development. RfR training, which will be provided under this proposal, requires an additional evaluation pre-post at six months and one year. In addition, for FY 21, we will add the following measure: 75% of directors that respond to a survey and whose staff attended a training in the prior quarter report noticing improved classroom practices as a result of what they learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any coordination with the JCC and their proposed project where they discuss their model being offered more broadly? <p>We have a long-term relationship with the JCC for coaching and training. While we were not part of the JCC's proposal creation, we are happy to continue to support them. BPFC provides training and professional supports to all child care facilities in Buncombe County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any coordination with AVL City Schools on their pyramid coaching/training program? <p>Yes, we were in contact about this proposal as it was being developed. One of our Early Childhood Program Consultants will be trained along with Asheville City Schools to increase the staff capacity at our agency. BPFC would be able to use these resources to support future professional development of teachers across Buncombe County.</p>			