

Palm Beach County Early Care & Education Workforce Study 2015

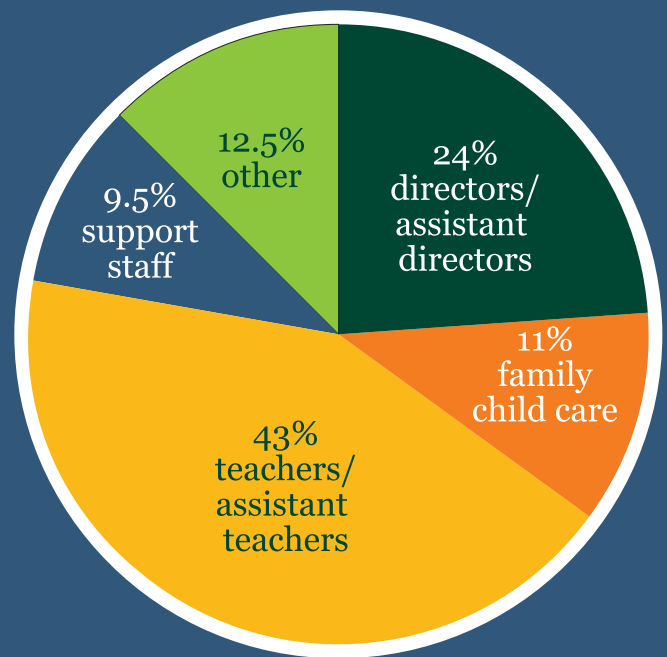
The Palm Beach County Early Care & Education Workforce Study highlights the characteristics, insights and challenges of those who are entrusted to care for Palm Beach County's children. The study, produced by the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education at Palm Beach State College, in partnership with Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, was designed to:

- Identify the characteristics of the county's Early Care and Education workforce.
- Describe the demand for, supply of and service gaps in professional development opportunities and supports for the workforce.
- Identify the individual and community characteristics that impact professional development choices.
- Provide recommendations and goals for continued education and professional development.

Funded by:

Workforce Snapshot

Based on approximately **530** survey responses



Who They Are

- **60%** are **40** years old and older
- **37%** are white, **35%** African-American, **20%** Hispanic
- **75%** work full-time

Where They Work

- **51%** work in center-based programs
- **27%** work in school district sites
- **14%** work in family childcare
- **8%** work in Head Start
- Most work in centers with an average of **11** staff
- Most work with **4**-year-old children



About Their Education

- **8%** graduated from high school; **38%** completed some college; **54%** graduated from college
- **49%** of preschool teachers report having a college degree, while only **4%** of infant/toddler teachers report having a college degree
- **69%** attend Palm Beach State College for training and education needs
- Most agree that face-to-face credit courses, conferences, and face-to-face trainings provide the greatest impact
- **83%** of workforce respondents feel comfortable in online courses
- **96%** of directors, **86%** of family childcare workers and **63%** of teachers / assistant teachers take courses beyond licensing requirements
- **84%** of instructional staff agree that their supervisors are supportive of professional development

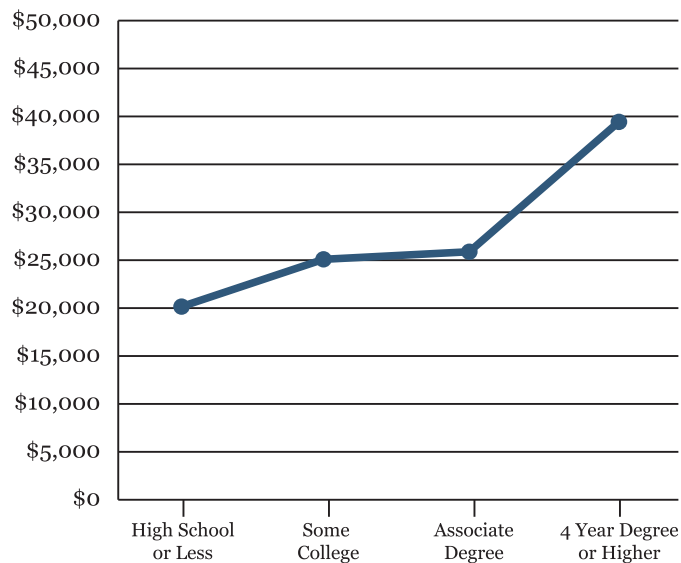
How They Use Technology to Receive Information

- **88%** have a home computer
- **75%** have computer access at work
- **67%** have access to a smartphone
- **85%** prefer email as the predominant notification mode regarding professional development opportunities
- Social Media Preferences: Facebook mostly, then Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram

About Their Income

The average wage for Teachers is **\$24,700**; Directors **\$40,800**; Family Childcare Providers **\$31,300**

Annual Wage



What They Believe Impacts Child Outcomes

- Adult-child interactions
- Attention to social-emotional needs
- Smaller class size
- Families

The needs assessment findings highlight a significant overall stability of Palm Beach County's Early Care and Education workforce, with an annual average turnover rate of approximately **10%**. About **80%** of family childcare providers indicate no intention of leaving the field. About **60%** of respondents indicate they will remain working in Early Childhood Education.

Education, Training and Professional Development Opportunities and Supports

Most respondents value professional development in annual evaluations; some link professional development to salary increases.

Directors and assistant directors identify financial assistance as the support most beneficial to professional development. Career advising and on-site coaching also are frequently identified as beneficial supports.

Local educational attainment exceeds state averages, and interest in professional development beyond licensure requirements is high at 74%. Approximately 69% participate in education opportunities at Palm Beach State College.

Most indicate a high level of satisfaction with professional development supports and their impact on education movement. These supports include:

- Outcomes Driven Training
- Technical Assistance
- Tutoring
- Financial Awards
- Career Advising
- Professional Registry

The Palm Beach County Early Childhood workforce has many supports to encourage professional development. Those most valued include training, the Registry and the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education newsletter and website.

To assist with educational needs, tutoring in the areas of computer skills, math and Early Childhood Education college credit courses are most favored.

Career advisor support is most needed for advisement on credit courses and with regard to financial support. Information is best received in-person at the College, or at a program, or via email.

Barriers to pursuing professional development:

- Courses are not available frequently enough
- Other responsibilities and commitments
- Time
- Language
- Transportation
- Need for extra help

Conclusions

The study provides evidence that there are high levels of satisfaction with professional development supports in Palm Beach County, and that these system supports are impacting career pathway movement. It presents an acknowledgement of strengths and challenges, and provides data that will lead to future actions.

Strengths:

- Local education attainment exceeds state averages.
- Interest is high in professional development beyond minimum licensure requirements.
- Respondents believe that college credit courses have the most positive impact on classroom practices and child outcomes.
- Registry-approved training is identified as the most important consideration in making decisions on professional development.
- Career advising, technical assistance and financial supports are highly valued.
- Directors and assistant directors report high levels of knowledge about available professional development supports.



Challenges:

- Ethnic disparities in leadership are found with only **8%** of responding directors / assistant directors indicating they are Hispanic and **28%** are African-American.
- High numbers of respondents (**33%** and **29%** respectively) work or live in under-served areas of Palm Beach County.
- Respondents noted a lack of significant wage increases associated with career pathway movement, particularly for movement from “some college” to completion of an associate’s degree.
- There are concerns regarding the amount of technical assistance and staff changes associated with technical assistance supports among various partners.

Recommendations and Goals:

- Increase awareness of professional development opportunities and supports available to Palm Beach County’s early childhood workforce.
- Increase leadership knowledge and skills among directors and program leaders in Palm Beach County.
- Increase knowledge and skills among practitioners who are English-language learners.
- Increase effectiveness among early learning practitioners in supporting children who are English-language learners.
- Improve effectiveness of practitioners in providing high quality infant-toddler early care and education.



Institute of *Excellence*
in Early Care and Education

812 Fern Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
561-868-3670 | IEECE@palmbeachstate.edu



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