

# **Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities Fiscal Year 2025**

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Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities Fiscal Year 2025.....	1
Executive Summary .....	4
Child Care Centers: Highlights and Key Findings .....	5
Family Child Care Homes: Highlights and Key Findings .....	8
Introduction.....	10
Methods.....	10
Survey Development.....	10
Respondents .....	11
Administration of Surveys .....	11
Survey Data.....	12
Gateways Registry .....	13
Profile of Child Care Centers: Key Findings.....	14
Respondent Role .....	15
Center Program Revenue .....	19
Capacity and Enrollment Patterns.....	25
Race and Ethnicity of Children in Programs .....	27
Staffing Patterns.....	29
Professional Development .....	34
Staff Turnover.....	37
Center Turnover .....	53
Staff Demographics .....	55
Salary and Wages.....	61
Benefits .....	71
Profile of Family Child Care Home Providers: Key Findings.....	75
Completed Surveys .....	75
Demographics .....	76
Accreditation and ExceleRate Illinois Status.....	81
Demographics of Children Served.....	82
Professional Development .....	83
Capacity and Enrollment.....	86
Assistants .....	87
Business Characteristics.....	89
Fee Policies .....	96
Professional Support .....	98
Turnover.....	99
Motivations and Perceptions about Providing Child Care.....	103
Conclusion .....	107
Appendix A: Survey Instruments.....	111
FY 2025 Child Care Center Survey .....	111
FY 2025 Licensed Child Care Centers Glossary (Alphabetized).....	134

Administrative Director .....	134
FY 2025 Family Child Care Homes Survey .....	136
FY 2025 Licensed Family Child Care Homes Glossary (Alphabetized).....	150
Appendix B: Child Care Resource and Referral System Map.....	152
Appendix C: Licensing Standards for Center Staffing .....	153
Appendix D: Licensing Standards for Family Child Care Homes .....	160
Appendix E: Licensing Standards for Group Family Child Care Homes.....	164
Appendix F: Acknowledgements.....	167

# Executive Summary

High quality child care enhances children’s experiences and developmental outcomes and fosters a skilled, productive, and resilient workforce for today and the years to come. Child care practitioners play a vital role in ensuring the quality of care and early education delivered to children and their families.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is statutorily mandated by the Children and Family Services Act 20 ILCS 505/5.15<sup>1</sup>, to conduct a survey of the workforce in licensed child care facilities every two years. The survey summarized in this report meets that mandate by documenting the following: (1) the number of qualified caregivers attracted to vacant positions and any problems encountered by facilities in attracting and retaining capable caregivers; (2) the qualifications of new caregivers hired at licensed child care facilities during the previous two-year period; and (3) the average wages and salaries and fringe benefits paid to caregivers throughout the State computed on a regional basis.

Collection of survey data began with the list of **7,329** licensed child care programs in Illinois (**2,508** licensed child care centers and **4,821** licensed day care homes) obtained through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). On April 7, 2025, providers with email addresses were sent an invitation to participate in the survey. This was followed by a letter mailed to all providers (including those that have already received an email) on April 14, 2025. On June 2, 2025, a reminder postcard was sent out to providers who had not yet completed the survey and thanked those that had already completed it. The survey was available in two formats: online and a paper document. Out of the 7,329 licensed programs, **483** child care centers (response rate = **19.3 percent**) and **799** family child care home providers (response rate = **16.6 percent**) completed the survey to some degree.

In addition to the outlined data collection above, the 2025 report incorporates administrative data from the Gateways to Opportunity Registry (Registry). Since all licensed child care center staff and licensed family child care providers are required to join and update their Gateways Registry membership at least annually, these data serve as the most reliable source for analyzing staff qualifications and salaries.

The 2025 survey findings and analysis of administrative data offer a comprehensive profile of the qualifications, compensation and benefits, and turnover rates among licensed child care programs in Illinois as of December 31, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> The Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 5/) is located on the Illinois General Assembly website: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=242&ChapterID=5>

# Child Care Centers: Highlights and Key Findings

## Capacity and Staffing

- The average licensed capacity of centers was reported as **87.7** children.
- The 483 responding directors reported a total of **8,121** employees in their programs, including:
  - 1,048 administrative directors and director/teachers,
  - 5,957 classroom teaching staff,
  - 319 food service staff,
  - 191 administrative support staff,
  - 182 building support staff,
  - 424 other types of staff.

## Accreditation

- Out of responding centers, **17.2 percent** (n = 84) were accredited by a national accrediting organization:
  - 52 (**10.8 percent**) were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
  - 25 (**5.2 percent**) were accredited by the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) under the auspices of the Association Early Learning Leaders<sup>2</sup>;
  - 5 (**1.0 percent**) were accredited by American Montessori Society (AMS);
  - 1 (**0.2 percent**) were accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA);
  - 1 (**0.2 percent**) were accredited through NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation);
  - No programs were accredited through AdvancED.<sup>3</sup>

## ExceleRate Illinois QRIS

- All of the responding centers were ExceleRate Illinois rated:
  - 349 (**72.3 percent**) of programs had received the Licensed Circle of Quality.
  - 11 (**2.3 percent**) of programs had earned a Bronze Circle of Quality.

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<sup>2</sup> Formerly the National Association of Child Care Professionals.

<sup>3</sup> To further identify the prevalence of accredited centers in Illinois, data were accessed from the Data Tracking Program (DTP) in July 2025 and showed that: 311 (12.4 percent of all Illinois centers) are NAEYC accredited, 106 (4.2 percent of all Illinois centers) are NACCP accredited, 16 (0.6 percent of all Illinois centers) are AMS accredited, 17 (0.6 percent of all Illinois centers) are COA accredited, 10 (0.3 percent of all Illinois centers) are AdvancED accredited, and 6 (0.2 percent of all Illinois centers) is NECPA accredited. Overall, 18.6 percent of all center programs in Illinois have been accredited by national organizations and meet nationally recognized standards for high quality.

- 71 (**14.7 percent**) of programs had earned a Silver Circle of Quality.
- 52 (**10.8 percent**) of programs had earned a Gold Circle of Quality.

### **Education Level of Staff**

- Out of **22,228** early childhood teachers in the Gateways Registry,
  - **73.2 percent** reported having at minimum some level of college education,
  - **60.4 percent** had completed a college degree (Associate's or higher),
  - **22.4 percent** had completed their degrees in early childhood education or child development, and
  - **4.8 percent** had completed a Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Care Professional (CCP) credential.
- **6.8 percent** of early childhood teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher reported they also held a Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood endorsement.

### **Salary**<sup>4</sup>

- According to the Gateways Registry, mean wages increased across all positions compared to FY2023. This represents a 9% increase for directors, a 15% increase for teachers, and a 19% increase for assistant teachers. When comparing wages to FY2021, director wages have increased 19%, teacher wages increased 29%, and assistant teachers increased by 35%.
  - The median hourly wage for a full-time administrative director was **\$23.75 per hour**, which is approximately equal to **\$49,400 per year** (n = 2,280).
  - The median hourly wage for a full-time early childhood teacher was **\$19.00 per hour**, which is approximately equal to **\$39,520 per year** (n = 12,237).
  - The median hourly wage for a full-time early childhood assistant teacher was **\$17.00 per hour**, which is approximately equal to **\$35,360 per year** (n = 12,117).

### **Benefits**

- More responding centers offered at least one type of insurance to their full-time staff than FY 2023:
  - **65.0 percent** of centers offered retirement/pension coverage for their employees.
  - **58.5 percent** of centers offered health insurance for their staff.
  - **52.6 percent** of centers offered dental insurance.
  - **49.7 percent** of centers offered life insurance.
  - **45.6 percent** of centers offered disability insurance.
- Most centers that responded to the survey provided time off benefits to full-time staff:
  - **96.1 percent** of centers provided paid holiday leave for staff.
  - **89.4 percent** of centers provided paid sick leave for employees.
  - **83.8 percent** of centers provided paid vacation leave to personnel.

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<sup>4</sup> Assumes 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.

## **Turnover and Retention**

- Turnover rates are lower in FY 2025 than in FY 2023 for all positions.
  - The turnover rate for early childhood teachers over the past two years *decreased* from **41.0 percent** in 2023 to **31.5 percent** in 2025.
  - The turnover rate for early childhood assistant teachers over the past two years *decreased* from **69.1 percent** in 2023 to **49.6 percent** in 2025.
  - The turnover rate for administrative directors over the past two years *decreased* from 17.7 percent in 2023 to 12.0 percent in 2025.
- Director/teacher positions have the lowest turnover rate in this report than they have in the past 10 years.
- Administrative directors had been employed at their current program an **average of 9.3 years**, and early childhood teachers had been employed an **average of 5.0 years**.
- The top reason for early childhood teachers leaving their jobs willingly was dissatisfaction with wages, followed by personal/family issues, being unhappy with job duties, and burnout.
- The least likely reasons for an early childhood teacher to leave their job willingly were desire to work remotely, staying at home with children, and not enough opportunities for professional development or growth.
- Directors reported that it often took **3 to 4 weeks** to fill positions required under Department Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensure; there was very little difference by type of position being filled.

# Family Child Care Homes: Highlights and Key Findings

## Capacity and Enrollment

- The average licensed capacity reported for family child care homes was **10.4** children, with providers reporting that they care for an average of **8.7** children in a typical week.

## Accreditation

- **4.8 percent** (n = 38 out of 799) of family child care providers were accredited through the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC).

## ExceleRate Illinois QRIS

- All responding family child care providers participated in ExceleRate Illinois.
  - **90.9 percent** (n = 726) were at the Licensed Circle of Quality
  - **5.5 percent** (n= 44) were at the Bronze Circle of Quality
  - **3.0 percent** (n = 24) were at the Silver Circle of Quality
  - **0.6 percent** (n = 5) were at the Gold Circle of Quality

## Education Level

- Data from the Gateways to Opportunity Registry shows an increase in level of education of all licensed family child care providers in the registry compared to FY 2023:
  - **48.0 percent** had at minimum some form of college education.
  - **36.2 percent** had an associate's degree or higher.
  - **13.6 percent** had an associate's degree or higher in either early childhood education or child development.
  - **0.4 percent** reported that they had a public school early childhood professional educator license (PEL).

## Salary and Benefits

- Licensed family child care providers self-reported an **average (mean) annual net income of \$20,000 to less than \$30,000 per year**, an increase over the \$13,985.85 in FY 2023 (these hours are time working with children and exclude self-reported hours worked on prep and facility care):
  - 25 percent of family child care providers netted \$10,000 to less than \$20,000;
  - 50 percent of family child care providers netted \$20,000 to less than \$30,000; and
  - 75 percent of family child care providers netted \$30,000 to less than \$40,000.
- **73.7 percent** of family child care providers required payment when closed for holidays, **57.1 percent** required payment when closed for vacation, **39.6 percent** when closed for sickness, and **19.8 percent** when closed for training.

- **89.3 percent** of family child care providers were covered by some form of health insurance.
- **56.5 percent** of family child care providers contributed to Social Security and **32.2 percent** set aside money for retirement, which are both increases compared to FY 2023.
- **64.7 percent** of family child care providers had received some form of public assistance in the preceding two years.

### **Years of Experience/Turnover of Surveyed Providers**

- Family child care home providers reported an **average of 19.9 years of experience** taking care of children in their homes, an increase of 2.4 years compared to FY 2023.
- **29.9 percent** of licensed family child care providers reported that they had been previously employed in a child care center or public school.
- **39.2 percent** of family child care providers considered quitting providing care in the preceding two years. Retirement, dissatisfaction with benefits, and perception of too little respect for what child care providers do were the top reasons considered.
- **36.5 percent** of family child care providers report that they plan to leave child care within an **average of 8.7 years**.

### **Working Hours**

- On average, family child care providers were paid to care for children **50.8 hours per week**.
- On average, family child providers spent an additional **20.3 hours per week** on aspects related to their child care business (preparing food, shopping, cleaning, record keeping and lesson planning).

### **Motivation for Providing Child Care**

- Family child care practitioners endorsed “*enjoy teaching children*” and “*I consider myself a small business owner*” as their two primary motivating factors for providing child care.

# Introduction

Statutory mandate by the Children and Family Services Act 20 ILCS 505/5.15 requires a statewide survey of the workforce of licensed child care facilities be conducted every two years by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). This survey evaluates:

- the number of qualified caregivers attracted to vacant positions and any problems encountered by facilities in attracting and retaining capable caregivers;
- the qualifications of new caregivers hired at licensed day care facilities during the previous two-year period; and
- the average wages and salaries and fringe benefits paid to caregivers throughout the State computed on a regional basis.

Other areas assessed by the survey include information pertaining to fiscal management, enrollment patterns, staffing patterns, staff turnover rates, and professional development.

IDHS contracted with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) to conduct the Fiscal Year 2025 survey.

## Methods

### Survey Development

An English and a Spanish version of the Salary and Staffing Survey was constructed for licensed child care centers, and separate versions (English and Spanish) were used for licensed family child care providers. To ensure comparability with previous survey years, many questions from past surveys were retained, with minor revisions in formatting and wording. To meet requirements of Public Act 103-1054 which became effective July 1, 2024, the survey questions were sent to internal and external stakeholders to allow them to provide feedback and language on topics, questions, and answer options.

Respondents had the option to complete the survey online or as a mailed paper questionnaire. Formatting and instructions varied slightly between the two formats; the survey content was identical across both versions.

To develop the online version of each survey, the paper questionnaires were transcribed online, using the web-based SurveyMonkey product (surveymonkey.com). Respondents accessed the surveys through a link on the INCCRRA website which provided links for the English and Spanish versions of the licensed child care center and licensed family child care home surveys.

The Salary and Staffing Survey webpage also included instructions for accessing both the online and paper versions, a “Frequently Asked Questions” section, and a link to “Previous Survey Highlights.” To protect confidentiality, each respondent was assigned a user code (a randomly generated ten-character code). Entering this code was necessary to gain access to the survey. Using their unique code, respondents could enter and exit the survey at their convenience, complete the survey at their own pace, and make changes to responses prior to submission.

Respondents had the option to request a paper copy of either the licensed child care center survey or the licensed family child care home survey by contacting INCCRRA via email or phone. Each mailed survey included a self-addressed, stamped envelope to facilitate easy return. Paper versions of both surveys are provided in Appendix A.

## Respondents

There are fifteen Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies in Illinois (see Appendix B) which together serve all 102 counties in Illinois.<sup>5</sup> Each CCR&R is assigned one or more counties to cover (referred to as their Service Delivery Area or SDA). All CCR&R agencies are partners with INCCRRA, which provides coordination and supports for the Illinois CCR&R System. CCR&Rs support licensed and license-exempt child care centers and family child care homes in their assigned areas. Child care facilities in Illinois are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Local CCR&Rs list these DCFS licensed child care facilities on the Data Tracking Program (DTP). INCCRRA maintains this provider database for Illinois. All **7,329** facilities in Illinois (**2,508** licensed child care centers and **4,821** licensed family child care homes listed in the database as providing care as of December 31, 2024) were invited to participate in the survey.

## Administration of Surveys

The table below outlines the timeline and actions related to the initial Salary and Staffing Survey dissemination.

<b>Timeline Step</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	April 7, 2025	Email invitations sent to providers with emails in database	<b>7,316 total</b> (2,505 child care centers; 4,811 family child care providers)
<b>Step 2</b>	April 14, 2025	Letters mailed to all providers (including those emailed)	<b>7,329 total</b> (2,508 child care centers; 4,821 family child care providers)

<sup>5</sup> SDAs 3 and 4 were combined for this report.

Timeline Step	Date	Action	Recipients
			4,821 family child care homes)

Notifications delineated the purpose of the study and invited the providers to participate in it, either by completing the survey online or via a mailed paper questionnaire.<sup>6</sup>

On June 2, 2025, reminder postcards were sent to the 6,475 providers (4,261 family child care home providers, 2,214 centers) who had not completed the survey as of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025. These postcards thanked providers who had completed the survey, reminded providers of the survey’s availability both online and as a paper document, and provided the contact information necessary for providers to obtain the paper copy of the survey if so desired. Analyses were based on all completed surveys returned by July 31, 2025.

The table below outlines the Salary and Staffing Survey response summary.

Program Type	Invited Programs	Completed Surveys	Response Rate	Online Surveys	Paper Surveys	Spanish Surveys
Child Care Centers	2,508	483	19.3%	477	6	3
Family Child Care Homes	4,821	799	16.6%	771	28	79

## Survey Data

A discrepancy in the number of responses to each question exists because not all respondents completed each question. The number of raw responses to a question is denoted by the symbol (n or n =).

### STATISTICAL NOTES

**Using this data set as an example:**

**1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 99**

**n (lowercase)- the number responding to a single question or providing a specific answer (in this dataset n = 13) whereas N (uppercase) is the number of respondents in total for the survey.**  
 Respondents sometimes skip a question, or it is inapplicable so the **n** for each question or analyses is noted.

**MEAN – the average, the result of adding all values in a data set and dividing by the number of values.**  
 Means are sensitive to each number in a data set but can be easily affected by extreme values. In the example data set above, the mean is calculated as:  $(1+2+2+2+3+3+4+5+6+6+7+8+99) \div 13 = 11.23$ . If the extreme

<sup>6</sup> Copies of both surveys are included in Appendix A.

value, 99, was to change to 9, the mean would change dramatically,  $1+2+2+2+3+3+4+5+6+6+7+8+9) \div 13 = 4.31$ .

**MEDIAN – the number that falls in the center of a list of data when scores are ordered by value.** The median is not affected by the relative size of extreme scores. The median in the data set above is **4**. Changing the 99 to 9 has no effect on the median.

**MODE – the number that occurs most frequently in a group of scores.** The mode in the data set above is **2**.

**RANGE – the range is the difference between the highest and lowest score.** In the sample data set the range is (1-99).

## Gateways Registry

The Gateways to Opportunity Registry is the database for the child care workforce in Illinois. The Gateways Registry launched in July 2009. In September 2012, DCFS mandated that all licensed child care center and family child care home providers/staff join and maintain membership in the Gateways Registry. Mandated membership allows the Gateways Registry to capture information for all child care staff, including various staff demographics (personal demographics and career demographics, including start date, position, etc.), education, wages, and certifications. Gateways Registry information is updated by the member at least annually (upon initial registration and again at each renewal) but can be made at any time. Updates to education and employment are required, however wages are optional. Data from the Gateways Registry was pulled on 03/08/2025 to be analyzed for this report.

# Profile of Child Care Centers: Key Findings

The term “child care center” encompasses an assortment of programs that have their own legal and regulatory status as well as funding sources. Types of programs include full-day/full-year center-based child care programs, preschool programs, nursery schools, state-funded Preschool for All pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start/Early Head Start programs, and school-age care programs. Staff qualifications and training requirements vary with the type of program.

“Legal status” indicates for-profit or not-for-profit; “regulatory status” refers to licensed or license exempt. Source of capital includes public and/or private funding sources. Public funding sources include but are not limited to: Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) vouchers, certificates or site contracts, the Chicago Department of Family Support Services (DFSS) site contracts, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) vouchers or certificates, Head Start, State Board of Education (ISBE)/Preschool for All (PFA), Child and Adult Child Care Food Program, and municipal, state or federal grants. Examples of private funding sources include tuition-based (parent fees), private donations, grants from foundations or agencies such as the United Way, corporate or employer subsidies and fundraisers.

Some centers are independent and stand-alone enterprises – either for-profit or non-profit; some are part of a corporation or chain (or are corporate-sponsored), and some are affiliated with a social service agency, hospital, or college or university. Others are sponsored through funds from the federal, state, or local government or are affiliated with the public school system. Some are single-site programs and others are multi-site programs.

All of these types of centers represent variation in child care delivery that is considered in the survey analyses.

Of the 2,508 invitations sent to child care centers, 477 online surveys were completed, and an additional 6 paper surveys were completed. **Thus, 483 center surveys were completed out of 2,508 delivered invitations, for a response rate of 19.3 percent.** Table 1 presents the response rates by CCR&R service delivery area (SDA) (see Appendix B).

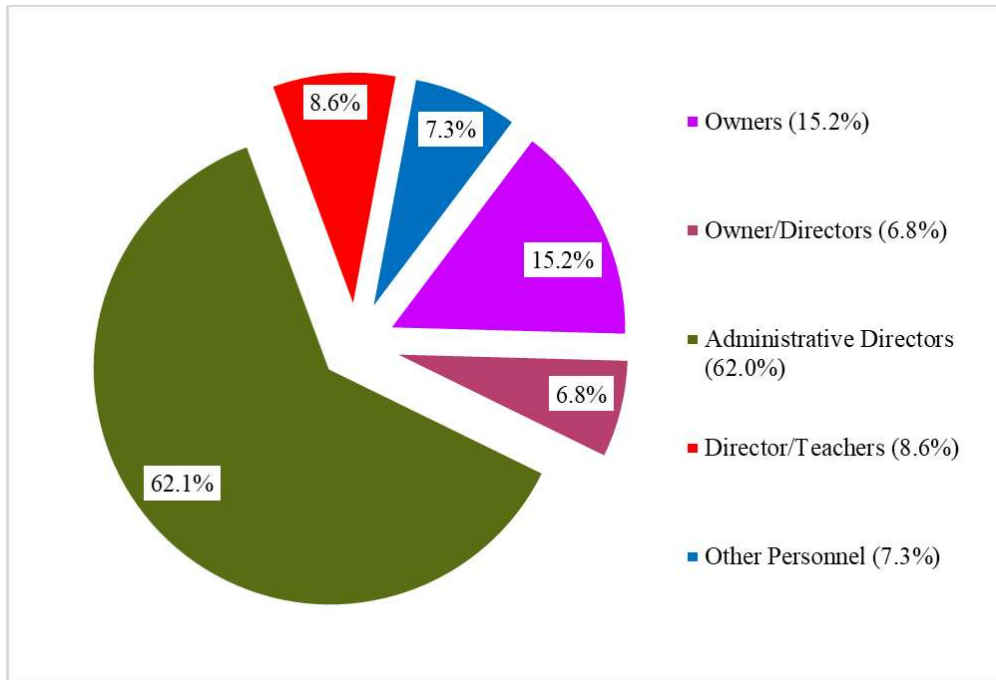
**Table 1. Survey Return Rates by Service Delivery Area: Licensed Child Care Centers**

<b>Service Delivery Area 2025</b>	<b>CCR&amp;R Office Location</b>	<b>Centers</b>	<b>Surveys Completed</b>	<b>Percentage of Surveys Completed</b>
<b>SDA01</b>	<b>Rockford</b>	41	8	19.5%
<b>SDA02</b>	<b>DeKalb</b>	100	25	25.0%
<b>SDA04</b>	<b>Glendale Heights</b>	404	79	19.6%
<b>SDA05</b>	<b>Joliet</b>	137	24	17.5%
<b>SDA06</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	1238	181	14.6%
<b>SDA07</b>	<b>Davenport</b>	58	17	29.3%
<b>SDA08</b>	<b>Peoria</b>	95	37	38.9%
<b>SDA09</b>	<b>Bloomington</b>	33	4	12.1%
<b>SDA10</b>	<b>Urbana</b>	64	17	26.6%
<b>SDA11</b>	<b>Charleston</b>	26	6	23.1%
<b>SDA12</b>	<b>Quincy</b>	18	7	38.9%
<b>SDA13</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	68	18	26.5%
<b>SDA14</b>	<b>Granite City</b>	123	35	28.5%
<b>SDA15</b>	<b>Mt Vernon</b>	49	9	18.4%
<b>SDA16</b>	<b>Carterville</b>	54	16	29.6%
<b>Total</b>		2,508	483	19.3%

## **Respondent Role**

Respondents were asked to provide basic information about their programs. Out of 483 centers responding to the survey, 60 (15.2 percent) were completed by owners, 27 (6.8 percent) by owner/directors, 246 (62.1 percent) by administrative directors (including CEO, executive director, and assistant directors), 34 (8.6 percent) by director/teachers, and 29 (7.3 percent) by other personnel including human resource personnel, administrative assistants, and fiscal officers. Figure 1 shows this breakdown. Since the majority of respondents to the licensed child care center survey were directors in some form (77.5 percent), all respondents will henceforth be referred to as “directors.”

**Figure 1. Respondent Role**



### **Types of Centers**

Directors were queried about their programs, specifically:

- (1) hours of operation/program type;
- (2) whether it is sponsored by a faith-based organization;
- (3) whether it exists as a single or multi-site program.

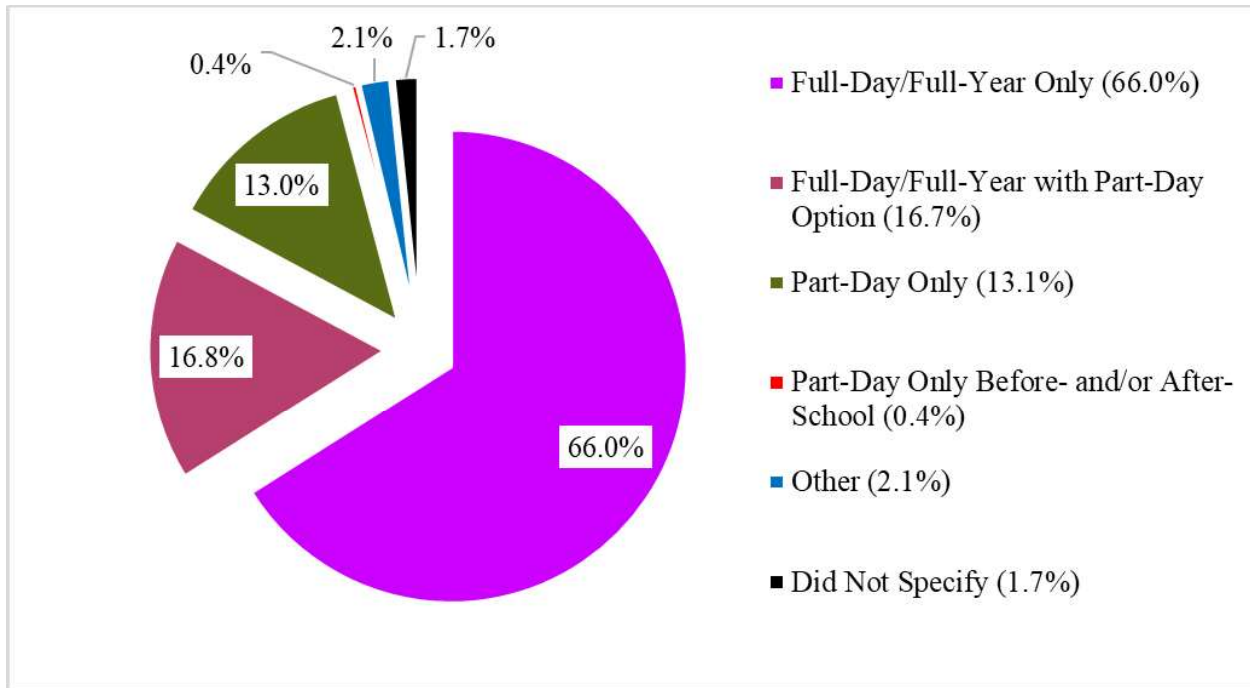
Data from the DTP database provided information as to whether the center was an accredited program and whether it has been awarded a Circle of Quality in the ExceleRate Illinois Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS).

Directors were asked to identify their center’s schedule of operation based on hours open and center type. As shown in Figure 2 below, the 483 surveys yielded the following results:

- 66.0 percent (n = 319) of centers were defined as full-day/full-year only (open at least eight hours per day for a minimum of 47 weeks per year);
- 16.8 percent (n = 81) were full-day/full-year programs with a separate part-day option;
- 13.0 percent (n = 63) were part-day only (nursery school, preschool, Head Start);
- 0.4 percent (n = 2) were defined as part-day only before- and/or after-school programs;
- 2.1 percent (n = 10) identified their center as operating on an “other” schedule; and
- 1.7 percent (n = 8) did not specify.

*(Please note: unless otherwise specified, all further analyses will combine the data from both full-day and part-day programs.)*

**Figure 2. Schedule of Operations**



When asked whether their centers were sponsored by a faith-based organization, 380 directors (78.7 percent) responded “No”, 91 (18.8 percent) answered “Yes”, and 12 (2.5 percent) did not answer the item.

Directors were also asked whether their program was a single-site program or part of a multi-site program. Over three-quarters (76.8 percent, n = 371) indicated that their program was a single-site program; 21.5 percent (n = 104) were part of a multi-site program, and 1.7 percent (n = 8) did not report whether or not their center was single or multi-site.

### **Accreditation & ExceleRate Illinois Status**

Accreditation demonstrates a center’s commitment to high quality in early care and education by meeting voluntary guidelines and standards established by national accrediting organizations. The ExceleRate Illinois Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS) is designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. ExceleRate Illinois has four Circles of Quality: Licensed, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Providers who are licensed through DCFS are automatically at the Licensed Circle of Quality. Providers engaged in a continuous quality improvement effort for their program can advance to higher Circles of Quality through training, self-assessment, and on-site assessments through trained assessors.<sup>7</sup> Providers who care for children eligible for the IDHS Child Care Assistance Program

<sup>7</sup> From the ExceleRate Illinois website, <https://www.ExceleRate Illinoisillinois.com/>

(CCAP) also receive a quality bonus above the standard payment rate if they achieve an ExceleRate Illinois Silver or Gold Circle of Quality. Using information from INCCRRA's databases, variables were created to indicate the accreditation and ExceleRate Illinois rating status of licensed centers participating in the salary and staffing survey.

Of all 483 programs responding to the FY 2025 survey, 17.2 percent (n = 84) were accredited:

- 52 (10.8 percent) were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
- 25 (5.2 percent) were accredited by the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) under the auspices of the Association Early Learning Leaders<sup>8</sup>;
- 5 (1.0 percent) were accredited by American Montessori Society (AMS);
- 1 (0.2 percent) were accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA);
- 1 (0.2 percent) were accredited through NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation)
- No programs were accredited through AdvanceED.<sup>9</sup>

In FY 2025, all 483 centers responding to the survey participated in ExceleRate Illinois, with 72.3 percent (n = 349) being at the Licensed Circle of Quality and 27.7 percent (n = 134) having a higher Circle of Quality. Of those 134 programs, 8.2 percent (n = 11) of programs earned a Bronze Circle of Quality, 53.0 percent (n = 71) of programs earned a Silver Circle of Quality, and 38.8 percent (n = 52) of programs earned the Gold Circle of Quality.<sup>10</sup> Please note that centers can simultaneously hold a Circle of Quality and be nationally accredited. Of the 134 centers that had achieved a rating above the Licensed Circle of Quality, 38.1 percent (n = 51) were also nationally accredited. Figure 3 shows the breakdown between Licensed and Higher Circles of Quality, with a further breakdown within the Higher Circles of Quality category.

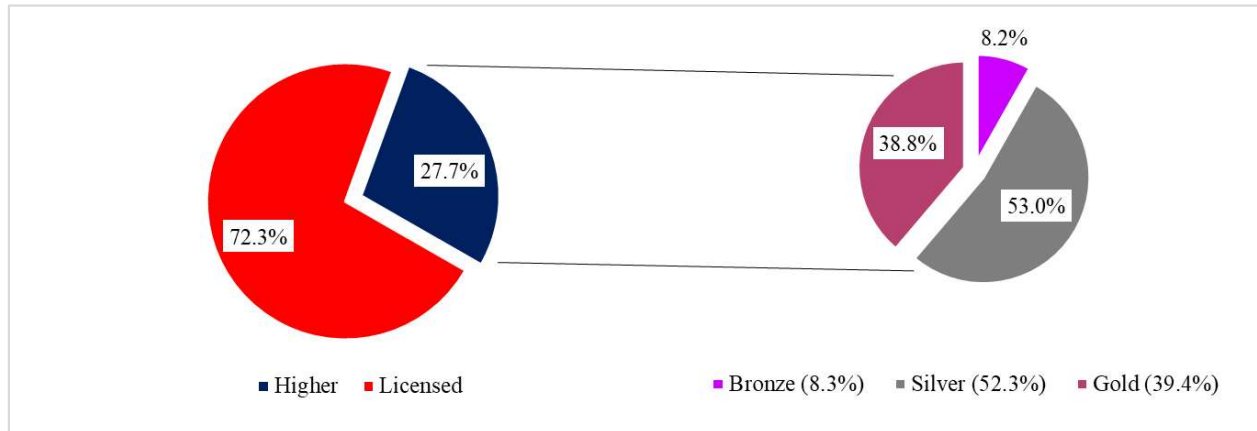
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<sup>8</sup> Formerly the National Association of Child Care Professionals.

<sup>9</sup> To further identify the prevalence of accredited centers in Illinois, data were accessed from the Data Tracking Program (DTP) in July 2025 and showed that: 311 (12.4 percent of all Illinois centers) are NAEYC accredited, 106 (4.2 percent of all Illinois centers) are NACCP accredited, 16 (0.6 percent of all Illinois centers) are AMS accredited, 17 (0.6 percent of all Illinois centers) are COA accredited, 10 (0.3 percent of all Illinois centers) are AdvancED accredited, and 6 (0.2 percent of all Illinois centers) is NECPA accredited. Overall, 18.6 percent of all center programs in Illinois have been accredited by national organizations and meet nationally recognized standards for high quality.

<sup>10</sup> According to data retrieved for all programs from INCCRRA's Data Tracking Program (DTP), on July 1, 2025: 79.9 percent of centers were at the Licensed Circle of Quality, 2.0 percent were at Bronze, 9.1 percent were at Silver, and 8.9 percent were at the Gold Circle of Quality.

**Figure 3. ExceleRate Illinois Participation**

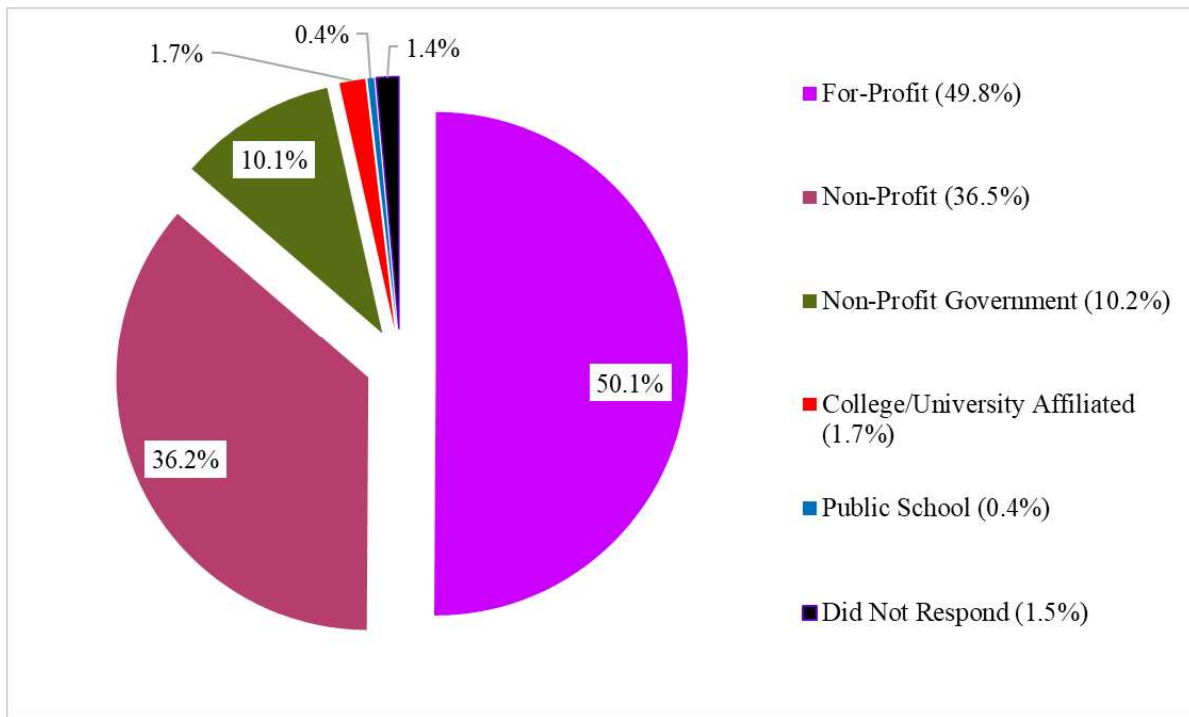


## Center Program Revenue

To evaluate center program revenues, directors were asked to identify the legal status of their center, report center funding sources, estimate the contribution of each funding source to the center's overall budget, and provide totals on center revenue, operating budget, and net profit. First, directors indicated whether their program operated as a for-profit or non-profit entity. The legal status of a program influences the types of revenue available to the program as well as other structural and operational factors that influence program functioning. Among the 483 centers who participated in the survey, the distribution of legal status is presented below in Figure 4:

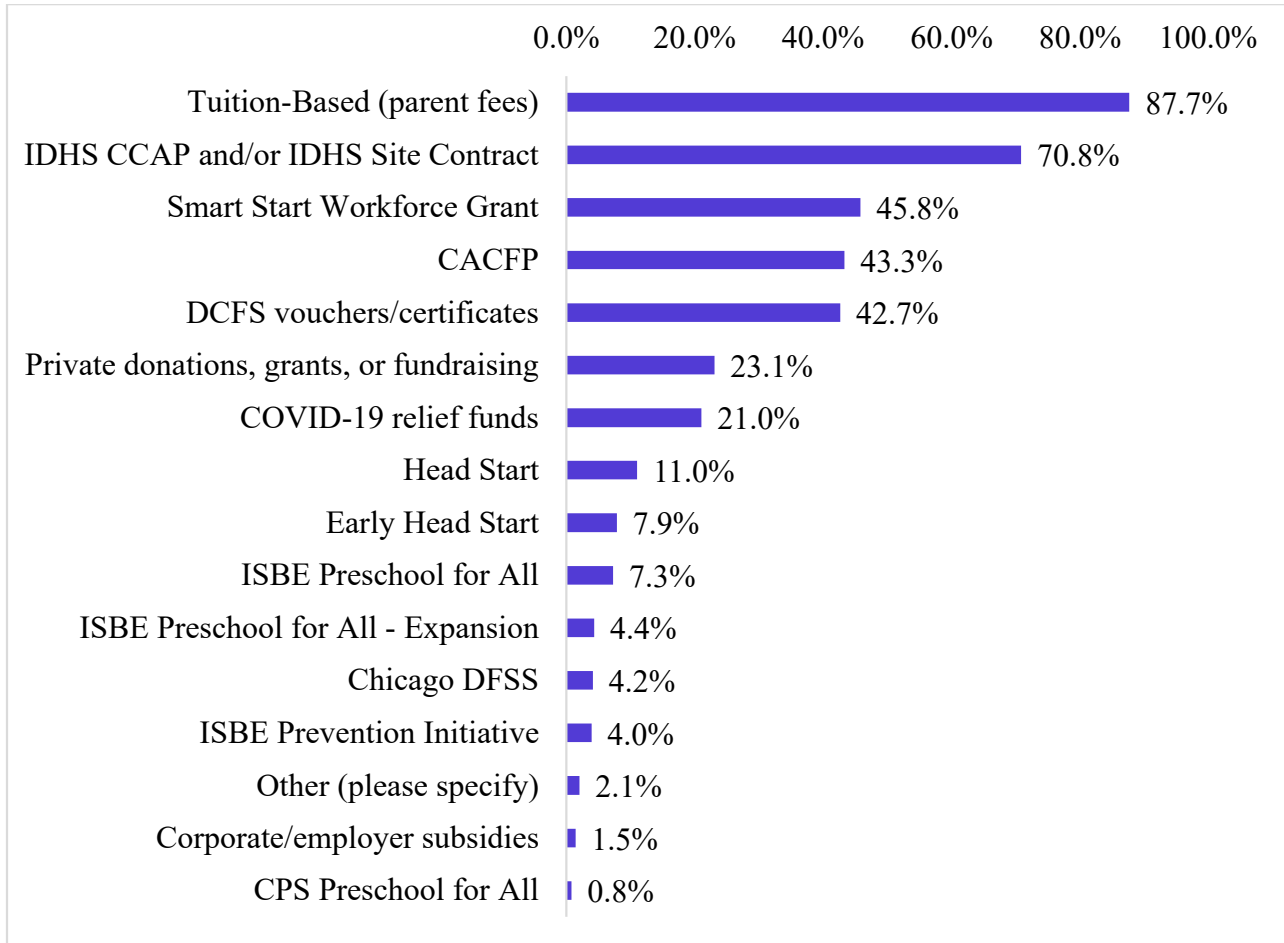
- 242 (49.8 percent) reported their centers as for-profit enterprises:
  - 29.6 percent (n = 143) reported their center as a for-profit private proprietary or partnership;
  - 18.4 percent (n = 89) reported their center as a for profit corporate sponsored;
  - 2.1 percent (n = 10) reported their center as a for-profit corporation or chain;
- 175 (36.2 percent) described their centers as a private non-profit:
  - 29.8 percent (n = 144) described their center as an independent private non-profit;
  - 6.4 percent (n = 31) described their center as a private non-profit affiliated with a social service agency or hospital;
- 49 (10.1 percent) identified their centers as a public non-profit- sponsored by federal, state, or local government;
- 8 (1.7 percent) identified their centers as college or university affiliated;
- 2 (0.4 percent) identified their centers as a public school; and
- 7 (1.4 percent) of center directors did not respond to this item.

**Figure 4. Center Legal Status**



Next, center directors were provided a list of funding sources and asked to specify the funding sources their program currently receives. Figure 5 and Table 2 identify each revenue source and the percentage and number of centers who reported receiving it. As Figure 5 reveals, 87.7 percent of all centers stated a portion of their funding base was comprised of tuition-based/parent fees. Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or IDHS Site Contracts were the second most common source of funding (70.8 percent).

**Figure 5. Type of Center Program Revenues: Percentage of centers reporting each type of revenue (n = 483)<sup>1</sup>**



**Table 2. Type of Center Program Revenues: Percentage of centers reporting each type of revenue (n = 483)**

Type of Program Revenue	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	n
<b>Tuition-Based (parent fees)</b>	87.7%	421
<b>IDHS CCAP and/or IDHS Site Contract</b>	70.8%	340
<b>Smart Start Workforce Grant</b>	45.8%	220
<b>CACFP</b>	43.3%	208
<b>DCFS vouchers/certificates</b>	42.7%	205
<b>Private donations, grants, or fundraising</b>	23.1%	111
<b>COVID-19 relief funds</b>	21.0%	101
<b>Head Start</b>	11.0%	53
<b>Early Head Start</b>	7.9%	38
<b>ISBE Preschool for All</b>	7.3%	35

Type of Program Revenue	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	n
<b>ISBE Preschool for All - Expansion</b>	4.4%	21
<b>Chicago DFSS</b>	4.2%	20
<b>ISBE Prevention Initiative</b>	4.0%	19
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	2.1%	10
<b>Corporate/employer subsidies</b>	1.5%	7
<b>CPS Preschool for All</b>	0.8%	4

Figure and Table should be read: “87.7 percent of licensed child care centers received tuition-based revenues.”

<sup>1</sup>Percentages add up to greater than 100 percent as respondents were asked to endorse all items applicable to their programs.

Insights into center finances were gathered through identification of various funding sources which comprised their center’s revenue base and estimation of the percentages each funding source provided to the center’s general revenue. Tuition and parent fees were reported to be the most common source of funding for centers (87.7 percent), with tuition and fees comprising an average of 54.3 percent (n = 413, median = 56 percent) or slightly above half of center revenue.

The average and median percentages for each additional funding source for the 483 centers who answered the question are provided below:

- IDHS CCAP vouchers, site contracts, or DFSS site contracts comprised 34.3 percent of the total revenue base (median = 25.0 percent),
- Head Start or Early Head Start funds comprised 25.1 percent (median = 0.0 percent),
- Smart Start Workforce Grants consisted of 10.9 percent (median = 10.0 percent),
- Preschool for All or Prevention Initiative funds made up 8.1 percent (median = 0.0 percent),
- DCFS vouchers/certificates made up 7.4 percent (median = 2.5 percent),
- CACFP funds made up 6.0 percent (median = 5.0 percent),
- Private donations and gifts were 3.5 percent (median = 1.0 percent),
- COVID-19 relief funds made up 3.3 percent (median = 0.0 percent),
- Other public funding provided 2.4 percent (median = 0.0 percent), and
- Corporate/employer subsidies were 0.2 percent of total revenue base (median = 0.0 percent).

Directors were asked to approximate the annual operating costs, annual income, and annual net profit for their centers. A wide range of budgets emerged. Annual operating expenses averaged \$686,337.27 (n = 331), with a median of \$500,000. Annual revenues averaged \$729,104.95 (n = 331) with a median of \$550,000.00. Annual net profit averaged \$100,703.31 (n = 323), with a median of \$20,000.<sup>11</sup>

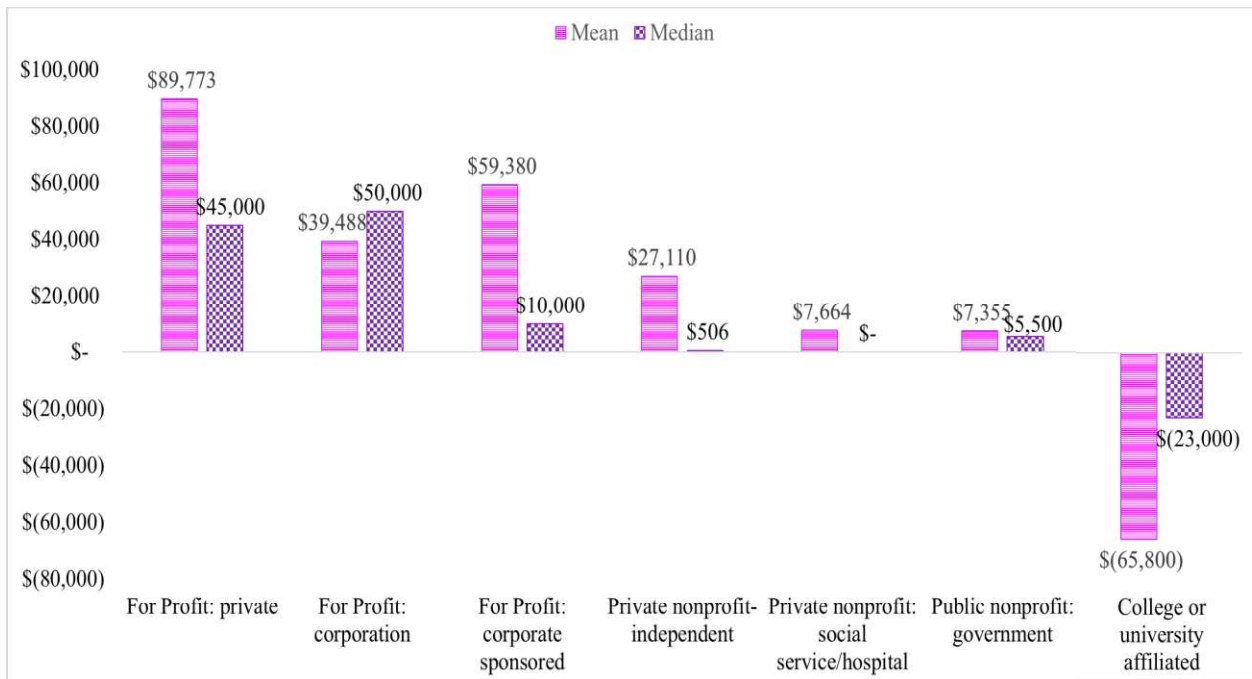
<sup>11</sup> Operating cost and revenue values over \$3 million were excluded from analyses.

As stated previously, the term “child care center” encompasses an array of programs and facilities such as public and private or for-profit and not-for-profit. To report a single figure for revenues or expenses that represents the fiscal experience of child care centers in Illinois obscures the varied nature of child care. Table 3 presents the operating costs and revenues of licensed Illinois child care centers by profit/nonprofit status and affiliation, and Figure 6 shows the annual profits by status. The table documents that fiscal outcomes of child care centers are as varied as the centers themselves. Not surprisingly, as with the findings from 2023, corporate for-profit centers generally yield a profit, but public and private nonprofit centers make considerably less.

**Table 3. Annual Revenues and Operating Costs by Profit/Non-Profit Status: Licensed Child Care Centers**

<b>Legal Status of Center</b>	<b>Mean Revenues</b>	<b>Median Revenues</b>	<b>Mean Operating Costs</b>	<b>Median Operating Costs</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>For Profit: private proprietary or partnership</b>	\$735,381	\$612,000	\$655,855	\$506,000	101
<b>For Profit- corporation or chain</b>	\$787,122	\$600,000	\$747,634	\$519,267	59
<b>For Profit- corporate sponsored</b>	\$626,305	\$184,000	\$566,924	\$194,000	7
<b>Private nonprofit- independent</b>	\$696,621	\$527,200	\$669,511	\$503,662	116
<b>Private nonprofit- affiliated with a social service agency or hospital</b>	\$692,301	\$440,716	\$684,637	\$450,000	14
<b>Public nonprofit- sponsored by federal, state, or local government</b>	\$784,582	\$527,120	\$777,227	\$451,225	24
<b>College or university affiliated</b>	\$818,000	\$250,000	\$883,800	\$500,000	5

**Figure 6. Annual Profits by Profit/Non-Profit Status: Licensed Child Care Centers**



As with previous surveys, questions were asked to ascertain whether the general economy was perceived to have affected either the operating costs and/or revenues of centers. Directors were asked to rate these changes on a scale from 1 (“Decreased greatly”) to 5 (“Increased greatly”). Directors rated the average change in operating costs as 4.4 (n = 442; median = 5.0) and the average change to revenue as 3.1 (n = 423; median = 3.0). Nearly 90 percent (87.6 percent) of directors reporting that revenues “stayed about the same” also noted an increase in operating costs over the past two years.<sup>12</sup>

If centers charge private-paying parents more for child care than the child care subsidy program reimburses, the center can ask the parent to pay the difference between the rates (if not a contracted site provider). Similar to FY 2023, one-third of the reporting centers (31.4 percent; n = 97 out of 309) enrolling subsidized children charge parents more than the amount reimbursed by the subsidy program.

Directors were also asked to rate the ease of collecting the parent’s share of subsidized child care (parent co-pay plus any difference between state reimbursement and center rate). On a scale of 1 (“Very easy”) to 5 (“Very difficult”), responding centers (n = 303) reported an average rating of 3.0 (median = 3.0), indicating that the task was “Neither easy nor difficult.” Directors were further asked whether collecting the parent share had gotten easier or more difficult in the past

<sup>12</sup> Proceed with caution on the interpretation of this finding since the answers can vary in accuracy due to the role of the survey respondent.

two years (again on a scale from 1 (“Much easier”) to 5 (“Much more difficult”). The average rate reported was 3.2 with a median of 3.0, indicating that it had mostly “stayed the same.”

## Capacity and Enrollment Patterns

Licensed capacity is defined as the maximum number of children permitted for care in the child care facility at any one time. The ages of children that can be enrolled in a licensed center varies between six weeks – 12 years of age and are stipulated on the center’s DCFS license. Of the 483 responding centers, the mean total licensed capacity was 87.7 children, with a median licensed capacity of 78.0. The average total capacity of reporting centers was about the same as the average licensed capacity of the 2,508 active licensed centers with data in the Registry (88.0 children).

When asked to recount their current total enrollment (how many children attended their program), directors (n = 422) reported an average current total enrollment of 84.6 children, with a median current total enrollment of 68.5. Please note that enrollments can exceed total licensed capacity as counts may be made across multiple shifts and/or include children who attend programs on a part-time basis.

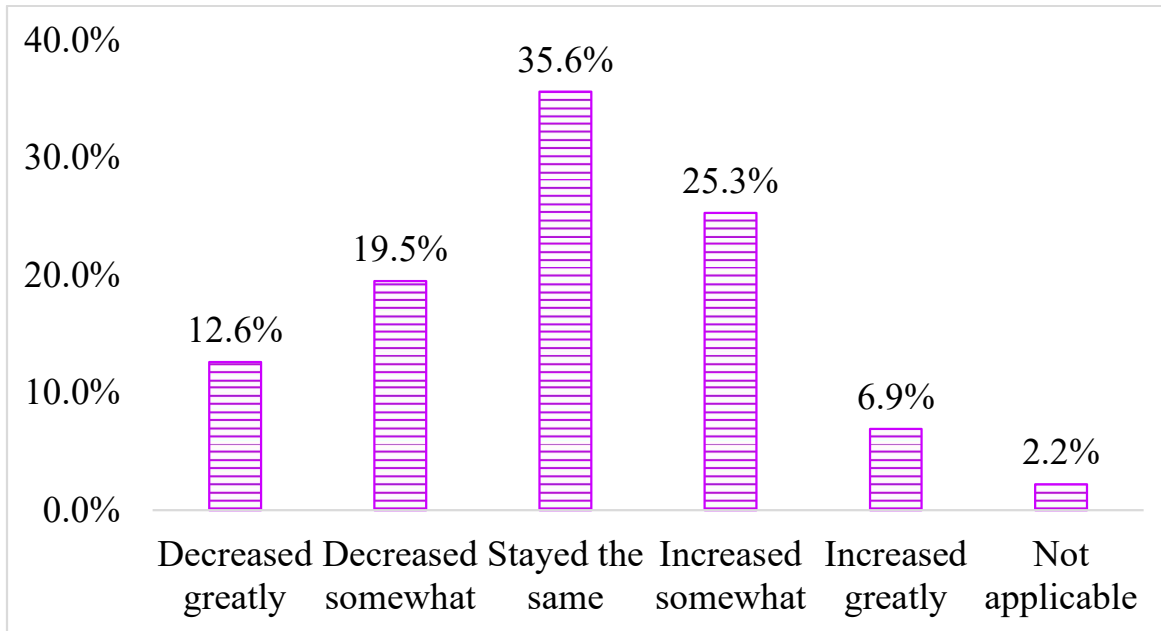
Directors were asked whether they had children enrolled whose families receive Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) financial assistance (subsidies). A preponderance (73.5 percent; n = 324) of responding centers have children enrolled whose families receive IDHS CCAP or DCFS assistance. These centers enrolled an average of 29.9 children (median enrollment of 25.0) whose child care was subsidized by the aforementioned types of assistance.

To calculate the percentage of subsidized children enrolled in a center, the number of subsidized children enrolled was divided by the center’s current total enrollment (n = 294). On average, 48.8 percent (median = 44.1 percent, with a range of from 0 to 100 percent) or, about four out of every ten children enrolled in responding licensed child care centers, had child care paid through IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS financial assistance. This was 1.2 percent lower than the FY 2023 Salary and Staffing Survey report of 50.1 percent, and 6.4 percent higher than the FY 2021 report of 42.4 percent.

Enrollment patterns and vacancies help illustrate how child care programs are balancing demand with available capacity, showing where slots are consistently filled and where gaps persist. They offer a clear picture of trends in family needs, staffing impacts, and areas where additional support or targeted recruitment may be necessary. To further explore the enrollment patterns of centers, directors were asked how certain enrollment factors changed in the past two years. Directors were first asked about the number of vacancies in their programs. On a scale from 1

(“Decreased greatly”) to 5 (“Increased greatly”), directors (n = 87) reported on average of 2.9 (with a median of 3.0). A rating of 3 means directors observed the change in the number of vacancies “stayed the same”. Figure 7 and Table 4 display the change in the number of vacancies.

**Figure 7. Change in Number of Vacancies (n = 87)**



**Table 4. Change in Number of Vacancies (n = 87)**

Enrollment Pattern	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Decreased greatly)</b>	12.6%	11
<b>2 (Decreased somewhat)</b>	19.5%	17
<b>3 (Stayed the same)</b>	35.6%	31
<b>4 (Increased somewhat)</b>	25.3%	22
<b>5 (Increased greatly)</b>	6.9%	6

As Figure 7 and Table 4 demonstrate, 67.7 percent of all the directors that responded rated the change in vacancy pattern as “decreased greatly” to “stayed the same” indicating stagnant or decreased vacancies from the prior report. It is interesting to note that per the DTP database, 6.8 percent (n = 18 out of 264) of all Illinois child care centers that closed their doors between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, closed due to “insufficient enrollment.” This is a slight increase from 5.7 percent in 2023 and 5.1 percent reported in the FY 2021 report.

Next, directors were asked to reflect on how their center’s enrollment pattern had changed over the past two years. On a scale from 1 (“Decreased greatly”) to 5 (“Increased greatly”), directors indicated that, on average, the change of enrollment was 3.1 (n = 87; median = 3.0). The number 3 on the scale designates that the current enrollment “stayed the same”, and the number 1 on the scale means that the current enrollment “decreased greatly”. A comparison of the 2023 data indicates perceived enrollment patterns have slightly increased.

When directors were asked to think about how staffing challenges impacted enrollment patterns, on a scale from 1 (“Decreased greatly”) to 5 (“Increased greatly”), directors indicated that, on average, the impact staffing challenges had on enrollment patterns was a 3.3 (n = 76; median = 3.0). The number 3 on the scale designates that the current enrollment “stayed the same”, and the number 4 on the scale means “increased somewhat”.

When providers were asked how their current enrollment compared to their pre-pandemic enrollment, out of 79 responses, 35.4 percent (n = 28) it stayed the same, 22.8 percent (n = 18) indicated enrollment decreased somewhat, 17.7 percent (n = 14) indicated enrollment decreased greatly, 12.7 percent (n = 10) indicated enrollment increased greatly, and 11.4 percent (n = 9). Over half (75.9 percent; n = 60) of 79 providers indicated their current enrollment was the same or lower than their pre-pandemic enrollment.

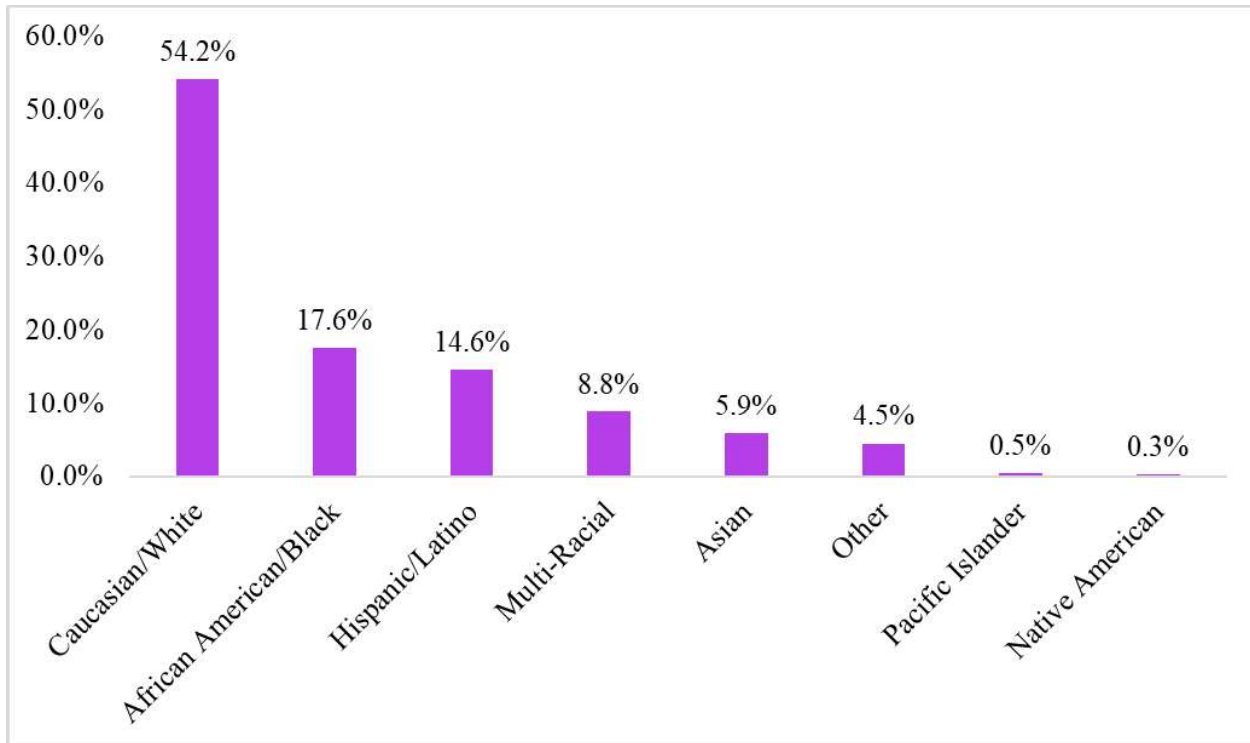
Finally, providers were asked how the number of children with families receiving IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS changed in the past two years. Responding directors rated the statement as a mean of 2.8 (median = 3.0, n = 17). A rating of 2 means “decreased somewhat” while a rating of 3 means “stayed the same”.

## **Race and Ethnicity of Children in Programs**

The survey asked respondents about the race/ethnicity of the children enrolled in their programs. The 483 center directors responding to the item estimated that, on average, 54.2 percent of enrolled children were Caucasian/White, 17.6 percent were African American/Black, 14.6 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 8.8 percent were multi-racial, 5.9 percent were Asian, 4.5 percent were of other racial/ethnic groups, 0.5 percent were Pacific Islander, and 0.3 percent were Native American. These averages are illustrated in Figure 8 below, with medians and ranges in Table 5.

**Figure 8. Race and Ethnicity of Children in Programs: Child Care Centers**

Data here shows what has previously been described in text.



**Table 5. Medians and Ranges of Children in Programs: Child Care Centers**

Race and Ethnicity	Median	Range
Caucasian/White	36.0%	0% - 100%
African American/Black	5.0%	0% - 100%
Hispanic/Latino	5.0%	0% - 100%
Multi-Racial	5.0%	0% - 99%
Asian	2.0%	0% - 97%
Other	1.0%	0% - 10%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0% - 100%
Native American	0.0%	0% - 11%

More than half (58.6 percent; n = 255) of directors reported the presence of children in their programs whose primary language was not English. Those directors also provided information on the other languages spoken by children in their center. In descending order, the reported languages are shown in Figure 9, with percentages reflecting the frequency of children speaking each language throughout the 435 centers participating in the 2025 Salary and Staffing Survey. Spanish emerged as the most commonly spoken non-English language, representing 41.4 percent of children in the responding centers.

**Figure 9. Primary Language Spoken by Children Whose Primary Language is Not English: Child Care Centers**



## Staffing Patterns

Understanding staffing patterns is essential for assessing the operational capacity and workforce stability of child care centers. To support this analysis, the survey collected detailed information on staffing structures across participating centers.

Directors were asked to provide information on the number of full-time and part-time staff employed in their center. To promote consistency in reporting job roles, the five staff positions highlighted in DCFS licensing standards (see Appendix C) were used throughout the survey. The director position was separated into two categories to distinguish between directors who work solely in an administrative capacity and those who also teach in their center. Additional job categories were included in the survey to correspond with previous surveys. Table 6 depicts the breakdown of center staff by position and the mean number of employees in each category.

**Table 6. Breakdown of Center Staff by Position**

<b>Position <i>DCFS-Defined Positions</i></b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Centers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Mean Employees per Center</b>	<b>Median Employees per Center</b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	467	356	1.3	1
<b>Director/Teacher<sup>2</sup></b>	581	354	1.6	1
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	3,019	400	7.5	6

<b>Position DCFS-Defined Positions</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Centers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Mean Employees per Center</b>	<b>Median Employees per Center</b>
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	2,610	387	6.7	5
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	234	195	1.2	1
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	94	146	0.6	0
<b>Other Staff Positions</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Centers</b>	<b>Mean Employees per Center</b>	<b>Median Employees per Center</b>
<b>Curriculum Coordinator</b>	60	147	0.4	0
<b>Family Support/ Parent Educator</b>	134	139	1.0	0
<b>Cook</b>	319	291	1.1	1
<b>Administrative Support/Secretary</b>	191	190	1.0	1
<b>Building Support Staff</b>	182	184	1.0	1
<b>Other</b>	230	116	2.0	0

<sup>1</sup>Number of centers with one or more staff members of the designated title.

<sup>2</sup>A director/teacher must meet the qualifications of both the director position and the teaching position.

The average child care center employs 19.4 staff members, the majority (86.2 percent) in DCFS-defined positions. Early childhood teachers represented the single largest category of child care staff (37.5 percent of all staff and 43.5 percent of all DCFS-defined instructional positions).

Directors were also asked to report on how many of their staff were lead teachers.<sup>13</sup> Lead teachers were defined as follows:

The lead teacher is the individual with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group/classroom of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning.

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<sup>13</sup> The position “Lead Teacher” is not an DCFS-defined position. However, a recommendation to revise DCFS Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers to add “lead teacher” as a separate role category for teaching staff, appeared in the publication: “*Who’s Caring for the Kids? The Status of the Early Childhood Workforce – 2008*,” a joint project by the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University and the Early Childhood Parenting Collaborative at the University of Illinois. This report combined statistical data from IDHS, ISBE and INCCRRA to summarize the status of early child care education in Illinois and to make recommendations. The report proposed a definition of a “lead teacher” and the ECE credential levels which would be required for personnel hired as lead teachers in a child care center and/or Preschool for All program.

- Depending on the program, this individual may be called a head teacher, master teacher, or teacher.
- Each group/classroom will have one, and only one, lead teacher.

A total of 411 centers provided information about lead teachers. Child care centers averaged 6.3 lead teachers, with a median of 5.0. This figure remains fairly consistent to findings from 2023 (mean = 6.7; median = 5.0) and 2021 (mean = 5.8; median = 5.0).

Table 6 shows average staffing patterns, indicating most centers employ one cook and one building support staff member; however, not all centers have these employees on their regular staff. Of the 483 directors who responded to the survey, 41.8 percent contracted for nursing<sup>14</sup> service, 41.4 percent contracted for grounds maintenance, 37.5 percent contracted for building cleaning, 32.7 percent indicated that they contracted for food service, and 7.5 percent indicated that they contracted for other services such as pest control, mental health, and information technology.

To further explore staffing patterns, directors were asked to identify the number of instructional staff with a second-paying job outside of their center. Out of 403 responses to this question, 214 directors (53.1 percent) answered “I don’t know” and 189 (46.9 percent) indicated that at least one member of their instructional staff had a second paying outside job. These directors reported that on average, 3.5 (median = 3.0; range = from 1 to 20) of their instructional staff had a second-paying job outside their center. The average number of staff reported to have an outside-paid job is consistent with the findings from the past several surveys. The range of 1 to 20 in this report is similar to the 1 to 15 in FY 23 and consistent with surveys FY 19 and older.

## Male Staff

Men continue to be underrepresented when it comes to employment in the field of early care and education. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2024 national percentage of men employed as child care workers was 5.6 percent, employed as teacher assistants was 18.8 percent and employed as preschool or kindergarten teachers was 3.2 percent.<sup>15</sup> To assess how many males were employed in child care centers in Illinois, respondents were asked to indicate the number of males employed in DCFS center staff positions. Table 7 presents the number of male staff members employed in each position. While 24.6 percent of centers employed one or more male staff members in an instructional capacity (all positions except administrative director in Table 7), only 2.5 percent (n = 162) out of 6,538 of instructional staff were male. This percentage remained consistent with the 2023 report.

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<sup>14</sup> Nursing services are only required for DCFS licensed programs who serve infants and toddlers.

<sup>15</sup> Figures were calculated by comparing the number of women in the position to the total number of workers in the position. This produced the number of males in the position. The BLS combines the positions of kindergarten and preschool teachers in their data. Data from, “Household Data Annual Averages”, *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>.

**Table 7. Male Center Staff by Position**

<b>Position</b>	<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Male Employees</b>	<b>Percent of Male Employees</b>	<b>All Centers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Centers with Male Staff<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percent of all Centers with Male Staff<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	467	30	6.4%	356	23	6.5%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	581	14	2.4%	354	14	4.0%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	3,019	49	1.6%	400	36	9.0%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	2,610	61	2.3%	387	49	12.7%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	234	27	11.5%	195	16	8.2%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	94	11	11.7%	146	10	6.8%
<b>All Positions</b>	7,005	192	2.7%	414	115	27.8%

*Table should be read: “Of the 356 centers who had administrative directors, 23, or 6.5 percent, had a male administrative director.”*

<sup>1</sup>*Number of centers with one or more staff members of the designated title.*

<sup>2</sup>*Number of centers with one or more male staff members of the designated title.*

<sup>3</sup>*Percentage of centers with one or more male staff members of the designated title.*

*Note: See Note on Table 6*

### **Non-English Proficiency of Staff**

As previously reported, over half of responding centers reported caring for at least one child whose primary language was other than English. To assess staff capacity to speak a language other than English effectively, we asked directors to indicate how many of their staff were proficient in a non-English language, specifically in reading and/or writing. Table 8 presents the results of this inquiry. Over 22 percent (22.7%) of the 6,538 instructional staff were reported to be proficient in a language other than English. This is consistent with what was reported in FY 2023. Nearly two-thirds of all centers (60.1 percent) had at least one instructional staff member who was reading and/or writing proficient in a non-English language. Although this is a slight decrease from 62.2 percent in 2023, we have seen an increase represented in this area since 2019.

**Table 8. Number of Staff who are Proficient in a Non-English Language by Position**

<b>Position</b>	<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Employees with Non-English Proficiency</b>	<b>Percent of Employees with Non-English Proficiency</b>	<b>All Centers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Centers with Non-English Proficient Staff<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percent of Centers who Employ Non-English Proficient Staff<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	467	87	18.6%	356	70	19.7%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	581	133	22.9%	354	87	24.6%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	3,019	705	23.4%	400	191	47.8%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	2,610	598	22.9%	387	182	47.0%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	234	30	12.8%	195	21	10.8%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	94	15	16.0%	146	11	7.5%
<b>All Positions</b>	7,005	1,568	22.4%	414	252	60.9%

<sup>1</sup>Number of centers with one or more staff members of the designated title.

<sup>2</sup>Number of centers with one or more staff members of the designated title proficient in a non-English language.

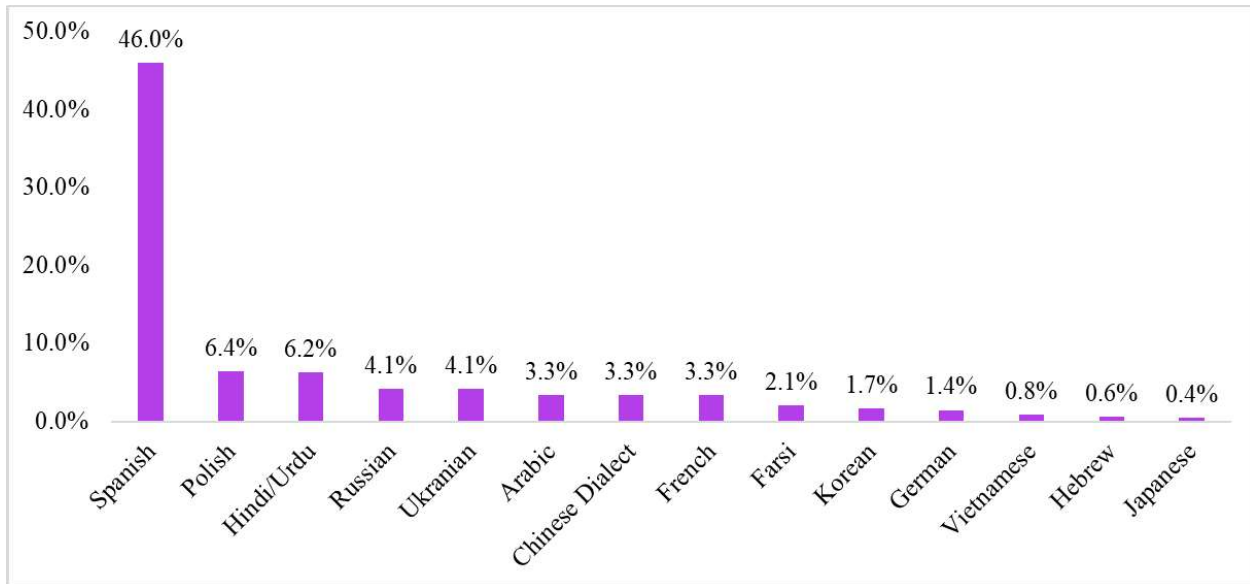
<sup>3</sup>Percentage of centers with one or more staff members of the designated title who are proficient in a non-English language.

Table should be read: “Of the 356 centers who had administrative directors, 70 or 19.7 percent had an administrative director who is reading and/or writing proficient in a language other than English.”

Note: See Note on Table 6

Multiple languages were reported for having reading and/or writing proficiency by center staff. Spanish was the most common, with 46.0% of all survey respondents having at least one staff person that speaks Spanish. Additional languages and percentages are shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Non-English Fluency of Staff**



## Professional Development

### Illinois State Professional Development Programs

Building and sustaining a highly qualified early childhood workforce requires access to comprehensive, well-coordinated professional development support. To understand how these resources are being utilized in the field, the survey examined directors' awareness—and their staff's awareness—of the professional development programs currently funded by IDHS available across Illinois.

Directors were asked about their awareness of and staff awareness of professional development opportunities and programs available in Illinois. Several programs exist including:

- The Gateways to Opportunity Illinois Professional Development System is recognized for promoting quality and professionalism for early care and education, school-age, and youth practitioners.
  - The **Gateways to Opportunity Registry** is available for practitioners to track their training and professional development.
  - **Great START** (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers) is a wage supplement program that aims to increase child care practitioner retention while encouraging increased levels of education.
  - The **Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program** provides partial funding for college scholarships for both center and family child care providers in an effort to increase the educational levels of practitioners, promote increased practitioner compensation, and improve the consistency of care for children.

- **Gateways to Opportunity** awards credentials to practitioners in the field of early care and education, school-age and youth development. The various credentials that can be earned are the ECE Credential, Infant Toddler Credential (ITC), Illinois Director Credential (IDC), Family Child Care Credential (FCCC), School-Age and Youth Development Credential (SAYD), Family Specialist Credential (FSC), and the Technical Assistance Credential. Achievement of these credentials is based on educational level, professional development background and work experience in the field of early care and education.
- The **Professional Development Advisor (PDA) Program** pairs experienced mentors with less experienced practitioners to assist the latter in meeting their professional development goals.
- The **Gateways i-learning System** is a web-based platform that provides online training opportunities to early care and education professionals. Online trainings offered include those required for DCFS licensing, ExceleRate Illinois, and Gateways to Opportunity Credentials.
- ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system (QRIS) designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping children develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) offer various services for child care providers, parents, and communities. Services for child care providers include technical assistance, training, and consultation from specialists including Quality and Infant Toddler Specialists, and Mental Health Consultants.

Directors' awareness of the various professional development opportunities is reported below.

- 99.5 percent (n = 412) of the 414 responding centers knew of the *Gateways to Opportunity Registry*;
- 97.6 percent (n = 399) of the 409 responding centers had heard of *Gateways to Opportunity Credentials*;
- 97.3 percent (n = 392) of the 403 responding center directors knew of the online training opportunities available through the *Gateways i-learning System*.
- 94.8 percent (n = 384) of the 405 responding centers reported they had heard of the *Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program*;
  - 27.3 percent (n = 132) of all 483 responding centers had at least one *Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship* participant for a total of 322 participants.
- 94.6 percent (n = 383) of the 405 responding centers knew of the *ExceleRate Illinois Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS)*;
- 90.8 percent (n = 365) of the 402 responding center directors reported knowing of the *Great START Program*;

- 53.8 percent (n = 260) of all 483 responding centers had at least one *Great START* recipient in the past two years. Those 260 programs had a total of 845 recipients.
- 82.1 percent (n = 321) of the 391 responding center directors knew of the consultants/specialists available through their local Child Care Resource & Referral agency; and
- 63.6 percent (n = 245) of the 385 responding center directors reported they had heard of the *Professional Development Advisor Program*.

## **Professional Development Curriculum**

According to DCFS Center Licensing Standards, center directors are responsible for ensuring that each child care staff member receives 15 hours of training each year. Programs that are accredited may have additional requirements beyond the 15 hours of training. A series of questions were devoted to finding out about the modes in which staff receive training, satisfaction with curriculum topics, and funding available for training opportunities for staff to meet the required training hours.

### Training Received

Of the 483 directors who responded to the question concerning training in early childhood education, child development, or health education:

- 78.1 percent (n= 377) reported their staff had received training through an online training source;
- 51.6 percent (n = 249) reported their staff had received training from a Child Care Resource and Referral agency;
- 42.0 percent (n = 203) reported their staff had received training at a professional association meeting or conference;
- 37.5 percent (n = 181) reported their staff had received training through the Child and Adult Care Food Program; and
- 29.2 percent (n = 141) reported their staff had received training from a local community training.

### Curriculum Topics

To gather information regarding director satisfaction with curriculum topics, directors were asked if they were satisfied with the number of curriculum topics for training offerings available to them and their staff. On a scale from 1 (“Very dissatisfied”) to 5 (“Very satisfied”), directors mostly reported having a neutral (mean = 3.5, median = 4.0) opinion regarding curriculum topics. Of the centers who participated in the survey, the average and median ratings for number of trainings at each level are below:

- Beginner level rated 3.7 (median = 4.0, n = 401)
- Intermediate level rated 3.5 (median = 3.0, n = 400)
- Advanced level rated 3.2 (median = 3.0, n = 402)

## Funding

To assess funding opportunities available for professional development training, directors were asked if they were aware of the Provider Services Funds available through their local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Directors' awareness of the Provider Services Funds is reported below.

- 69.1 percent (n = 282) of the 408 directors who responded to the question are aware of quality improvement funds<sup>16</sup>,
- 65.0 percent (n = 262) of the 403 directors who responded to the question are aware of individual professional development funds, and
- 62.2 percent (n = 253) of the 407 directors who responded to the question are aware of First Aid/CPR funds.

Training for teaching/instructional staff offered off-site and through college coursework can require funding. Directors were asked if their program provided funding for off-site training and college coursework to pay for registration fees, tuition reimbursement, and other off-site course related fees. Of the 411 directors who responded to the question, 74.2 percent of directors offered funding for offsite and college coursework fees. Directors were also asked if they provide paid time off for staff who take off-site or college coursework. Results indicated that paid time off is offered by 57.4 percent (n = 408) of centers to their teaching/instructional staff members.

Finally, directors were asked if they participate in a local professional child care network or organization. Over half (54.5%; n = 219 out of 402) of directors indicated they participate in a local child care network/organization.

## **Staff Turnover**

### **Turnover Rates**

A consistent, nurturing caregiver is essential to creating a positive, trusting learning environment for children. That is why a stable workforce is paramount to providing quality child care. To understand the factors that comprise a stable workforce, questions concerning turnover rate, applicants, and new hires were posed.

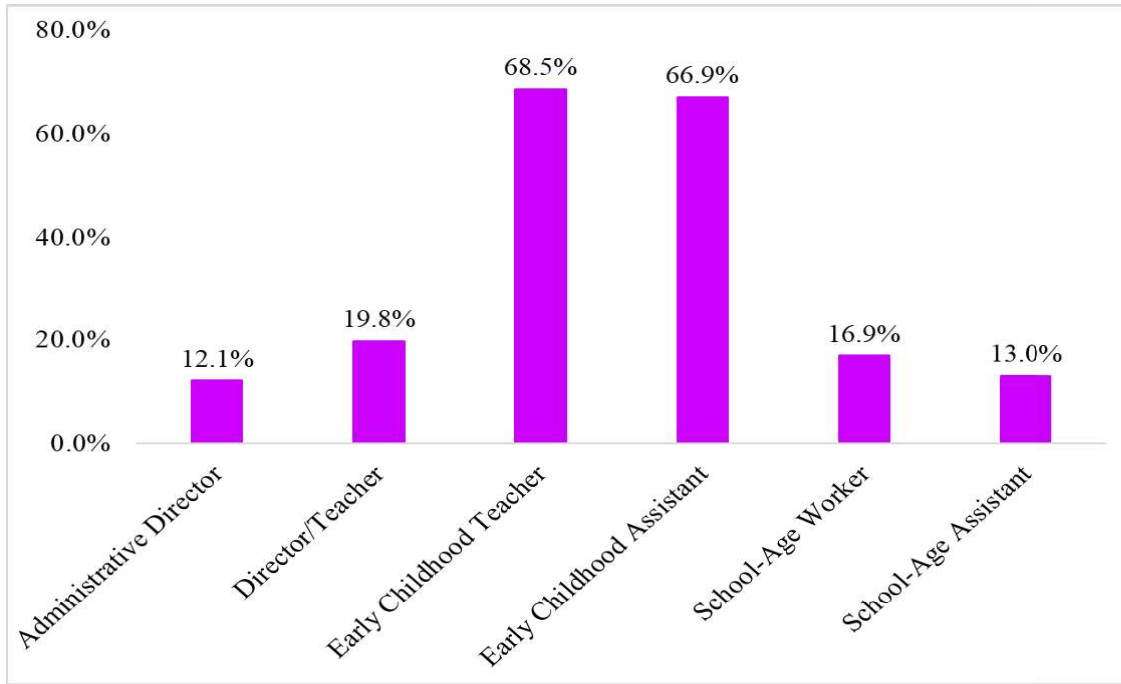
Directors were asked to report the number of full-time and part-time staff members who left their program within the past two years. Temporary, substitute, and seasonal staff were excluded. To determine the turnover rate at the center level, the number of centers with staff exits within the past two years was compared to the number of centers employing staff with the given position.

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<sup>16</sup> The Quality Improvement Funds have been developed and are offered through the child care resource and referral agencies to assist and support programs that are choosing to work towards / maintain an ExceleRate Illinois Circle of Quality.

The percentage of centers that experienced turnover in one or more of the following positions is depicted below in Figure 11 and Table 9.

**Figure 11. Two-Year Center Level Turnover Rate by Position**



**Table 9. Two-Year Center Level Turnover Rate by Position**

Position	Centers Employing Staff <sup>1</sup>	Centers who had Staff Leave in Past 2 Years <sup>2</sup>	Center Turnover Rate
<b>Administrative Director</b>	356	43	12.1%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	354	70	19.8%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	400	274	68.5%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	387	259	66.9%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	195	33	16.9%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	146	19	13.0%

<sup>1</sup>Number of centers reporting at least one staff member of the indicated position. See Table 6.

<sup>2</sup>Number of centers reporting at least one staff member leaving in the past two years from the indicated position.

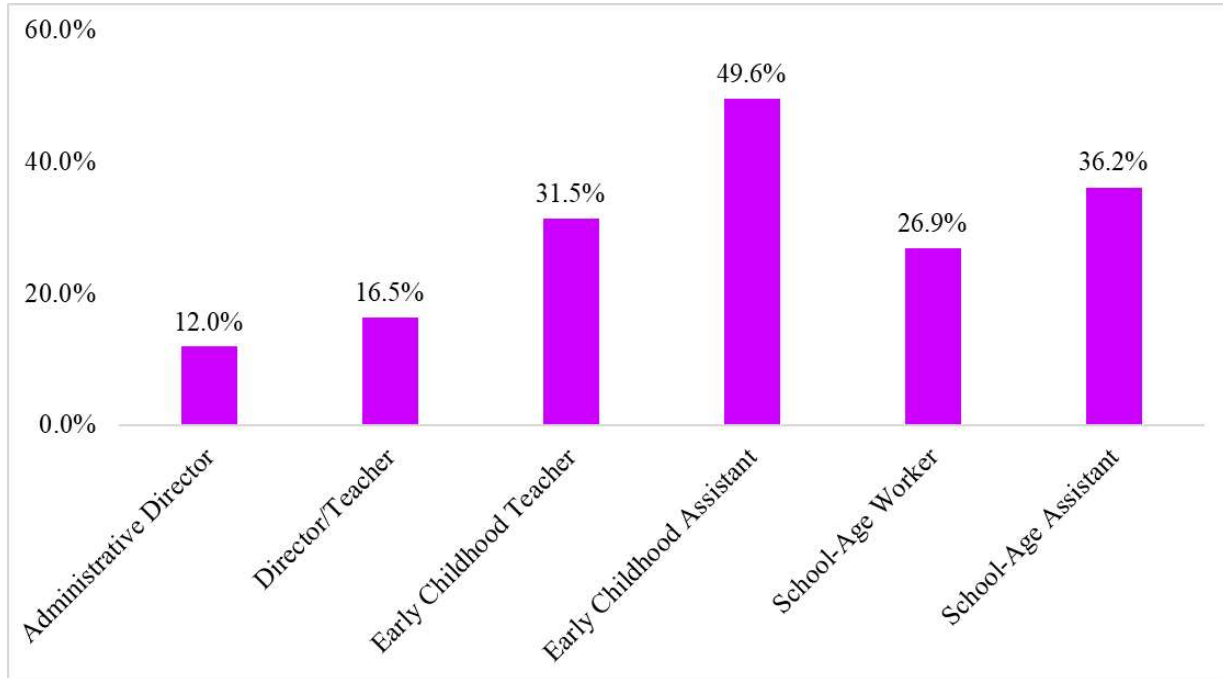
Figure and Table should be read: “12.1 percent of centers employing administrative directors had one or more administrative director(s) leave their position in the past two years.”

The percentage of centers experiencing staff turnover in the past two years decreased for all positions, which is an improvement from FY 2023. Administrative director and director/teacher positions decreased 3.7 to 3.9 percent (12.1 percent and 19.8 percent in 2025 compared to 15.8 percent and 23.7 percent in 2023), and early childhood teacher, early childhood assistant, school-

age worker, and school-age assistant positions decreased 1.8 to 6.8 percent (68.5, 66.9, 16.9, and 13.0 percent in 2025 compared to 71.8, 73.7, 20.3 and 14.8 percent in 2023, respectively).

To calculate the turnover rate on an individual position level, the number of staff who left in the past two years was compared to the number of employees currently employed. Figure 12 and Table 10 display the percentages of employees who left each position within the past two years.

**Figure 12. Two-Year Individual Position Level Turnover Rate by Position**



**Table 10. Two-Year Individual Position Level Turnover Rate by Position**

Position	Employees <sup>1</sup>	Staff Who Left in Past 2 Years	Employee Turnover Rate
Administrative Director	467	56	12.0%
Director/Teacher	581	96	16.5%
Early Childhood Teacher	3,019	960	31.5%
Early Childhood Assistant	2,610	1,294	49.6%
School-Age Worker	234	63	26.9%
School-Age Assistant	94	34	36.2%

<sup>1</sup>From Table 6

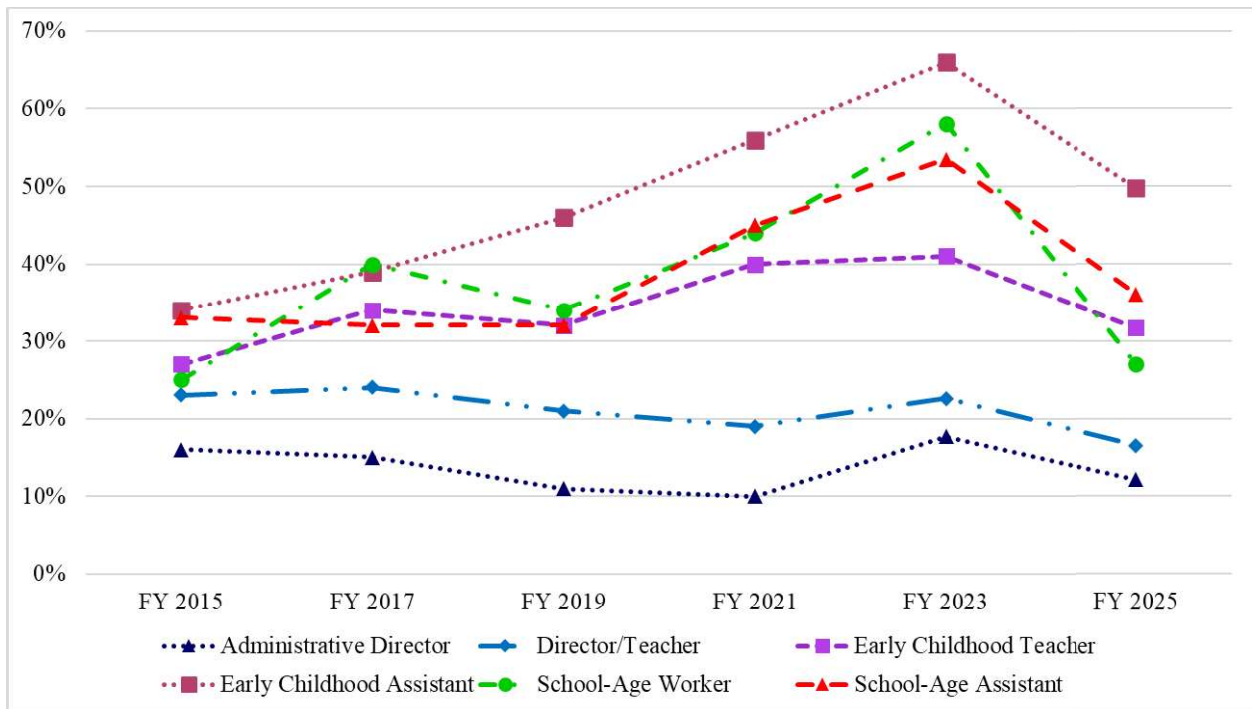
<sup>2</sup>Number of staff members who left in the past two years from the indicated position.

Figure and Table should be read: "12.0 percent of administrative directors left their position within the two years preceding the survey."

Individual turnover rates decreased for all reported positions. Individual turnover rates for administrative directors and director/teacher positions showed decreases (12.0 and 16.5 percent in 2025 compared to 17.7 and 22.6 percent in 2023). Turnover rates for early childhood teachers and assistants saw a significant decrease (31.5 and 49.6 percent in 2025 compared to 41.0 and 69.1 percent in 2023).

Data regarding the two-year turnover rate by position has been collected since the FY 1997 Staffing Salary Survey (although the turnover rates were referred to as “replacement rates” in all surveys prior to FY 2003). Table 11 offers a comparison of these rates from FY 2015–FY 2025, and Figure 13 provides a visualization of the changes in turnover over time.

**Figure 13. Two-Year Turnover Rate (Individual Position Level) by Position: FY 2015 - FY 2025**



**Table 11. Two-Year Turnover Rate (Individual Position Level) by Position: FY 2015 - FY 2025**

Position	FY 2015	FY 2017	FY 2019	FY 2021	FY 2023	FY 2025
<b>Administrative Director</b>	16%	15%	11%	10%	18%	12%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	23%	24%	21%	19%	23%	17%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	27%	34%	32%	40%	41%	32%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	34%	39%	46%	56%	69%	50%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	25%	40%	34%	44%	58%	27%

<b>Position</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	33%	32%	32%	45%	54%	36%

*Table should be read: “For every 100 administrative directors working in FY 2025, 12 administrative directors left in the two years preceding the survey.”*

Turnover rates are lower than in 2023 for all positions. More specifically, director/teacher positions have the lowest turnover rate in this report than they have in the past 10 years.

### **Turnover Reasons**

The survey initially requested information on staff separations, distinguishing between voluntary departures and terminations. Directors reported that 71.8 percent of staff that left their program in the past two years did so voluntarily. Directors were then asked, for the staff who left of their own choice, their reason for leaving (to the best of the director’s knowledge). Table 12a shows the percentage of staff in that position that left for each given reason, based on the director’s knowledge. (Percentages will not add to 100 as not all directors specified reasons, and some specified more than one.)

**Table 12a. Percentage of Staff Departures by Reason for Leaving Voluntarily**

<b>Reason for Leaving</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>Dissatisfied with wages</b>	7.1%	16.7%	17.8%	13.4%	11.1%	2.9%
<b>Dissatisfied with work schedule or availability of hours</b>	7.1%	1.0%	3.7%	3.1%	6.3%	8.8%
<b>Dissatisfied with benefits</b>	5.4%	7.3%	4.9%	3.2%	7.9%	5.9%
<b>Not enough opportunities for professional development or growth</b>	3.6%	3.1%	2.3%	1.9%	3.2%	0.0%
<b>Unhappy with job duties</b>	7.1%	6.3%	9.4%	6.3%	4.8%	0.0%
<b>Burnout</b>	12.5%	6.3%	8.9%	3.9%	6.3%	2.9%
<b>Retirement</b>	8.9%	3.1%	3.4%	1.2%	0.0%	5.9%
<b>Personal or family issues</b>	17.9%	11.5%	13.3%	13.8%	6.3%	8.8%
<b>Staying at home with their own children</b>	1.8%	3.1%	2.5%	2.1%	0.0%	2.9%

<b>Reason for Leaving</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/ Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>Desired remote work</b>	3.6%	3.1%	1.4%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Stopped coming to work</b>	0.0%	1.0%	6.6%	6.3%	1.6%	17.6%
<b>Unknown/did not share reason</b>	5.4%	1.0%	6.7%	7.8%	6.3%	5.9%

*Table should be read: "Directors reported that 17.8 percent of Early Childhood Teachers that left in the past two years did so because they were dissatisfied with wages."*

It is apparent from Table 12a that the most significant reasons for staff exit were dissatisfied with wages; personal or family issues; and burnout. It is interesting to note that dissatisfied with wages decreased significantly for all positions compared to FY 2023<sup>17</sup>, however burnout increased compared to FY 2023, specifically for director positions. Also, retirement is a greater factor than wages for administrative directors and school-age assistants. In addition to asking the reason why staff left, directors were asked a follow-up question to determine where the staff that left went – whether they stayed in the field or went into a different field, as shown in Table 12b.

**Table 12b. Percentage of Staff Departures by Type of New Position**

<b>Reason for Leaving</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/ Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>Took a position for higher salary</b>	1.8%	2.1%	5.2%	3.5%	3.2%	0.0%
<b>Took a position that offered benefits</b>	3.6%	2.1%	2.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Took a remote and/or hybrid position</b>	3.6%	2.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Opened their own child care center or family child care home</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Went to work at a different child care center</b>	7.1%	12.5%	13.4%	7.0%	3.2%	5.9%
<b>Went to work within the public school system</b>	1.8%	10.4%	12.7%	3.6%	9.5%	8.8%

<sup>17</sup> Proceed with caution on the interpretation of this finding since the category “dissatisfied with wages or benefits” changed in the FY 2025 survey to two separate categories: “dissatisfied with wages” and “dissatisfied with benefits.”

Reason for Leaving	Admin. Director	Director/Teacher	Early Childhood Teacher	Early Childhood Assistant	School-Age Worker	School-Age Assistant
Found another job within the field of early care and education	14.3%	5.2%	5.5%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Found another job outside of the field of early care and education	10.7%	7.3%	11.6%	13.6%	7.9%	5.9%
Moved out of the area	7.1%	1.0%	6.1%	3.9%	15.9%	8.8%
Went back to school	1.8%	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%	4.8%	2.9%
Unknown/did not share	8.9%	9.4%	13.6%	16.7%	9.5%	2.9%

Table should be read: "Directors reported that 13.4 percent of Early Childhood Teachers that left in the past two years went to a different child care center."

While directors did not know what type of position many of the departing staff ended up going to, it seems that administrative directors, director/teachers, and early childhood teachers frequently went to work at different child care centers or in the public school system. A plurality of staff ended up going to work in positions outside of the field of early care and education, especially staff from the early childhood teacher and assistant categories. Moreover, administrative directors left their positions to pursue other positions within the early care and education field.

In response to the question about staff turnover, directors reported:

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*"We have a very low staff turnover rate as we treat our employees very well. Really wish we could afford to pay them way more, but we can only pay based on parent tuition."*

*"The two assistants who left graduated college and moved away."*

*"Many of my staff have left due to personal reasons or burnout."*

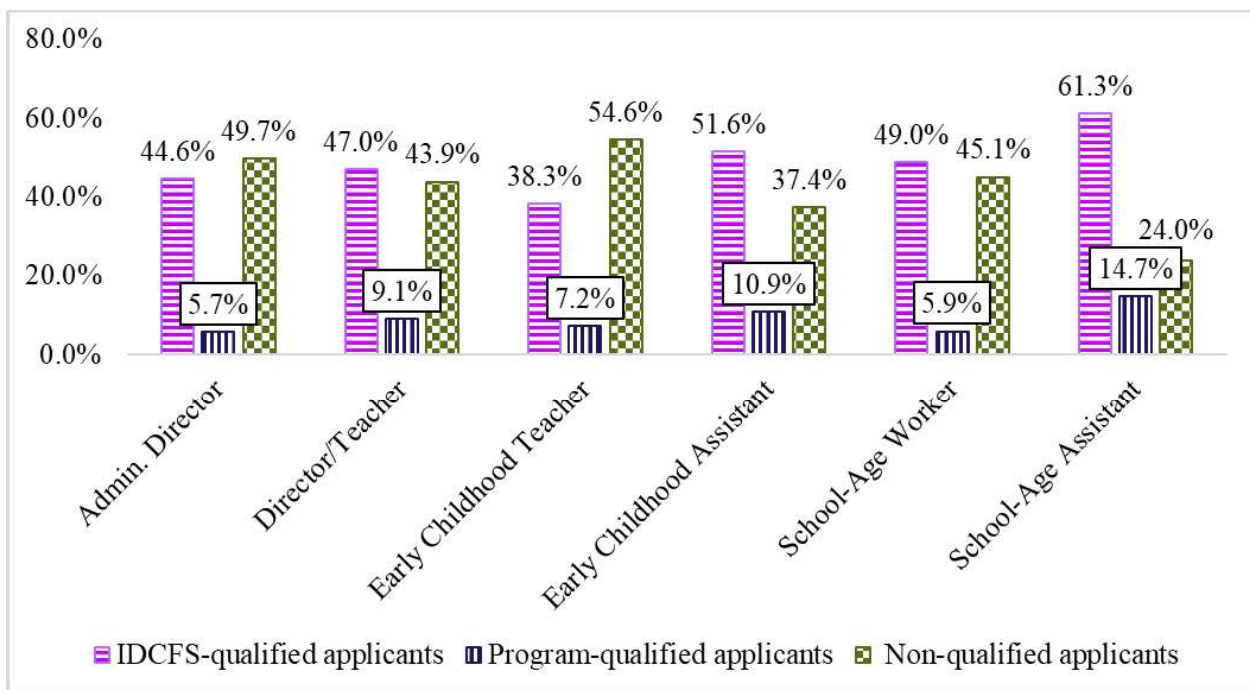
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## **Applicants for Vacant Positions**

Directors were asked to respond to several items to determine how vacant positions are filled, the type of applicants seeking employment, and the factors attracting applicants to the field.

For each job position, directors were asked to report the number of DCFS qualified applicants<sup>18</sup>, program qualified applicants (e.g., met qualifications to work in Head Start), and non-qualified applicants who had applied for advertised vacancies within the past two years. Figure 14 and Table 13 show the number of applicants who applied for each position and the percentage of applicants qualified (either DCFS or program qualified) for the position as reported by the 480 center directors participating in the survey. Comparing these results from those of the 2023 survey, the percentage of non-qualified applicants for all positions decreased while the percentage of DCFS-qualified applicants for all positions increased. The percentage of DCFS-qualified administrator director applicants increased from 25.2 percent in 2023 to 44.9 percent in 2025. In addition, the percentage of DCFS-qualified early childhood teacher applicants increased from 30.5 percent in 2023 to 38.3 percent in 2025. The number of DCFS-qualified assistant teachers increased from 42.1 percent in 2023 to 51.6 percent in this report.

**Figure 14. Percentage of Applicants by Position and Qualifications**



<sup>18</sup> DCFS revised qualifications to include an interim early childhood teacher in June 2025, after survey collection was completed. The requirements can be found under subsection (a)(4)(I) here: <https://ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089004070D01400R.html>

**Table 13. Percentage of Applicants by Position and Qualifications**

<b>Qualification Status<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>Overall qualified applicants (DCFS + Program-qualified)</b>	50.3%	56.1%	45.5%	65.5%	54.9%	76.0%
<b>DCFS-qualified applicants</b>	44.6%	47.0%	38.3%	51.6%	49.0%	61.3%
<b>Program-qualified applicants</b>	5.7%	9.1%	7.2%	10.9%	5.9%	14.7%
<b>Non-qualified applicants</b>	49.7%	43.9%	54.6%	37.4%	45.1%	24.0%
<b>Total applicants</b>	654	1,379	5,127	6,981	410	292

*Figure and Table should be read: “50.3 percent of applicants for administrative director openings were qualified (DCFS + Program qualified), with 44.6 percent being DCFS-qualified and 5.7 percent being Program-qualified. 49.7 percent of applicants for administrative director openings were not qualified.”*

To document the length of time needed to fill vacant positions, directors were asked to respond to a four-point rating scale of 1 (“Less than one week”) to 4 (“More than four weeks”). Directors most often reported that all positions took 3 to 4 weeks to fill with administrative, director/teacher, and early childhood teacher positions taking the longest, which is consistent with past years: administrative director (mean = 3.7; n = 70), director/teacher (mean = 3.6; n = 90), early childhood teacher (mean = 3.5; n = 283); early childhood assistant (mean = 3.1; n = 285), school-age worker (mean = 3.1; n = 56), and school-age assistant (mean = 2.9; n = 36).

Directors were also asked whether the length of time required to fill vacant positions has changed over the past two years. For each staff category, directors rated change using a five-point scale, with 1 meaning “Decreased by more than 2 weeks” and 5 meaning “Increased by more than 2 weeks. The mean rating directors reported are as follows: 3.9 (median = 4.0, n = 83) for administrative directors; 4.1 (median = 5.0, n = 113) for director/teachers; 4.1 (median = 5.0, n = 250) for early childhood teachers; 3.8 (median = 4.0, n = 256) for early childhood assistants; 3.9 (median = 4.0, n = 67) for school-age workers; and, 3.8 (median = 3.0, n = 60) for school-age assistants. Across all staff categories, directors indicated hiring timelines have generally increased over the past two years.

<sup>19</sup> DCFS Licensing Standards for Center Staff are located in Appendix C. Head Start requirements can be found here: <https://headstart.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-91-staff-qualifications-competency-requirements>

Directors reported on the ease or difficulty of filling vacancies within the past two years on a five-point rating scale, with 1 meaning “Very easy” and 5 meaning “Very difficult”. Their responses are reflected in Table 14.

**Table 14. Mean Rating of Difficulty in Filling Program Staff by Position**

<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
4.4 (n = 94)	4.5 (n = 134)	4.4 (n = 277)	3.8 (n = 274)	3.9 (n = 83)	3.6 (n = 66)

Many center directors expressed their concerns with the difficulties they have had finding qualified staff to work in their centers.

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*“It’s difficult to recruit or keep Qualified ECE teachers since they are more attracted to go to CPS which offers higher pay and better benefits.”*

*“We operate as a half-day program due to our DCFS license. We are also located in an affluent area. When looking for employees, I find that qualified candidates are either are either looking for full time, which we do not offer, or like the half day schedule but do not want to work as many days as we need because they are not reliant on income.”*

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### **Hires for Vacant Positions**

In examining the qualifications of newly hired staff, directors were asked to identify the number of hires within the past year that met, exceeded, or did not meet DCFS qualifications for their position as defined in the licensing standards. Table 15 indicates that many hires at least met DCFS standards. All positions had more qualified hires (meet and exceeded combined) than unqualified hires. Moreover, all positions except director/teacher and early childhood teacher had a larger percentage of hires who exceeded qualifications than those who did not meet qualifications.

**Table 15. Percentage of Hires in the Past Year Meeting, Exceeding, or Failing to Meet DCFS Qualifications**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Met Qualifications: # of Responding Centers</b>	<b>Met Qualifications: # of Hires</b>	<b>Met Qualifications: % of Hires</b>	<b>Exceeded Qualifications: # of Responding Centers</b>	<b>Exceeded Qualifications: # of Hires</b>	<b>Exceeded Qualifications: % of Hires</b>	<b>Did Not Meet Qualifications: # of Responding Centers</b>	<b>Did Not Meet Qualifications: # of Hires</b>	<b>Did Not Meet Qualifications: % of Hires</b>
<b>Admin. Director</b>	43	51	48.1%	30	36	34.0%	7	19	17.9%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	67	125	46.6%	36	59	22.0%	11	84	31.3%
<b>EC Teacher</b>	175	677	48.7%	85	316	22.8%	37	396	28.5%
<b>EC Assistant</b>	195	1,063	70.4%	52	294	19.5%	35	152	10.1%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	28	83	67.5%	12	27	22.0%	7	13	10.6%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	21	45	75.0%	6	8	13.3%	5	7	11.7%

Center directors were invited to compare the qualifications of staff hired within the past two years with the qualifications of staff hired more than two years ago and record their impressions using a five-point scale (see note in Table 16). Table 16 indicates that on average, directors appraised new hires to have similar qualifications to previous hires, which is in keeping with results from the FY 2023 and FY 2021 reports. Prior Salary and Staffing Survey data have revealed most directors to indicate that their new hires were somewhat more qualified. One explanation for this trend over the past four surveys could be that the increase of applicants who meet and exceed DCFS qualifications over the past several years is now the norm; therefore, it only appears as if the frequency of qualified applicants is stagnant.

**Table 16. Perceived Changes in Qualifications of New Hires in the Past Two Years by Position**

<b>Position</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Median</b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	68	2.9	3.0
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	97	2.9	3.0
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	221	2.8	3.0
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	221	2.8	3.0
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	71	2.9	3.0
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	60	2.9	3.0

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = “Much less qualified”; 2 = “Somewhat less qualified”; 3 = “Same qualifications”; 4 = “Somewhat more qualified”; 5 = “Much more qualified”

Finally, directors were asked how many of the newly hired staff that did not meet DCFS qualifications continued education and/or training to meet DCFS qualifications. Of the staff that were hired that did not meet DCFS qualifications, the following continued education and/or training:

- 5.2% (n = 25) administrative directors;
- 7.5% (n = 36) director/teachers;
- 15.3% (n = 74) early childhood teachers;
- 17.8% (n = 86) early childhood assistants;
- 5.8% (n = 28) school-age workers; and
- 5.6% (n = 27) school-age assistants.

### **Applicants Who Identify as Male**

From providing a male role model for children to helping fathers become more involved in their child’s care, individuals who identify as male serve a myriad of important functions in early care and education. Directors indicated the number of individuals who identify as male applied for advertised positions within the past two years. Table 17 shows the results.

**Table 17. Number of Applicants who Identify as Male for Vacant Positions in the Previous Two Years**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Responding Centers</b>	<b>Applicants who Identify as Male in Past Two Years</b>	<b>Proportion of Applicants who Identify as Male per Open Position</b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	63	48	7.3%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	86	40	2.9%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	231	232	4.5%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	241	276	4.0%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	40	23	5.6%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	29	10	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	--	629	4.2%

As Table 17 shows, the positions of school age assistant and administrative director garnered the highest percentage of applicants who identify as male. This is a shift from what was reported in FY 2023 which presented a higher percentage of applicants for the early childhood teacher and early childhood assistant positions. Overall, there was a lower number of applicants reported for the purpose of this report based on response results which may contribute to the decrease noted in this area from 8.3 percent in FY 2023 to 4.2 percent in this report.

Directors were further requested to specify the number of individuals who identify as male they had hired within the past two years. Results displayed in Table 18 indicate that at least 5 percent of individuals who identify as male who applied for each position were hired. For positions related to working with school-age children, the percent of individuals identifying as male hires out of total individuals identifying as male applicants was higher and over 50 percent. Compared to all applicants for open positions, less than one percent of director/teacher, early childhood teacher, and early childhood assistant identified as male and 2.0 percent for administrative director. Overall, one percent of all new hires identified as male. The proportion of hires who identified as male per open position was generally consistent with the low percentages seen in past reports.

**Table 18. Number of Applicants who Identify as Male Hired for Vacant Positions in the Previous Two Years**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Responding Centers</b>	<b>Applicants who Identify as Male Hired in Past Two Years</b>	<b>Percent of Hires who Identify as Male out of Total Applicants who Identify as Male</b>	<b>Proportion of Hires who Identify as Male per Open Position</b>
<b>Administrative Director</b>	60	13	27.1%	2.0%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	88	2	5.0%	0.1%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	213	33	14.2%	0.6%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	222	48	17.4%	0.7%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	37	14	60.9%	3.4%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	28	5	50.0%	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	--	115	18.3%	0.8%

## Non-English Reading and/or Writing Proficiency of Applicants

As expressed previously in this report, the diversity of languages spoken by children in child care centers suggests that nearly two-thirds of responding centers have staff with which children can effectively communicate in their primary language. Directors were asked to identify primary language information for applicants and hired employees in the past two years, and the results are displayed in Table 19. Over 80 percent (83.2 percent) of the applicants reading and/or writing proficient in a non-English language applied for the position of early childhood teacher or assistant. The proportion of applicants reading and/or writing proficient in other languages was slightly lower for early childhood teacher position and early childhood assistant than in FY 2023.

**Table 19. Number of Applicants Proficient in a Language Other than English who Applied for Vacant Positions in the Previous Two Years**

Position	Responding Centers	Applicants Proficient in Other Language in Past 2 Years	Proportion of Applicants Proficient in Other Language in Past 2 Years
Administrative Director	63	24	3.7%
Director/Teacher	86	40	2.9%
Early Childhood Teacher	231	300	5.9%
Early Childhood Assistant	241	449	6.4%
School-Age Worker	40	19	4.6%
School-Age Assistant	29	43	14.7%
<b>Total</b>	--	875	5.9%

Directors also identified the languages spoken by primarily non-English speaking applicants.

- 99 reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Spanish (out of n = 135)
- 17 directors reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Polish (out of n = 80)
- 15 directors reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Hindi/Urdu (out of n = 79)
- 14 directors reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Ukrainian (out of n = 78)
- 14 directors reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Arabic (out of n = 76)

- 12 reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Russian (out of n = 75)
- Less than ten directors reported applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in the following languages:
  - Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin (out of n = 72),
  - Vietnamese (out of n = 71),
  - Farsi (out of n = 70),
  - French (out of n = 70),
  - Japanese (out of n = 69),
  - Korean (out of n = 69), and
  - German (out of n = 68).

Directors were then asked to indicate how many applicants that can read and/or write proficiently in a non-English language were hired, as shown in Table 20. The percentage of applicants who can read and/or write proficiently in other languages that were hired (43.8 percent) increased from the 28.6 percent reported in FY 2023 and FY 2021. The overall proportion of applicants proficient in another language hired out of all applicants increased from 2.1 percent in FY 2023 to 2.6 percent in this report.

**Table 20. Number of Applicants Reading and/or Writing Proficient in a Language Other than English who Were Hired for Vacant Positions in the Previous Two Years**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Responding Centers</b>	<b>Applicants Proficient in Other Language <u>Hired</u> in Past Two Years</b>	<b>Percent of Applicants Proficient in Other Language <u>Hired</u> out of All Applicants Fluent in Other Language</b>	<b>Proportion of Applicants Proficient in Other Language <u>Hired</u> out of All Applicants</b>
<b>Admin. Director</b>	60	9	37.5%	1.5%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	88	6	15.0%	0.4%
<b>EC Teacher</b>	213	144	48.0%	2.8%
<b>EC Assistant</b>	222	211	47.0%	3.0%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	37	9	47.4%	2.2%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	28	4	9.3%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	--	383	43.8%	2.6%

Of those directors who reported hiring applicants who can read and/or write proficiently in a non-English language:

- 95 directors reported hiring applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Spanish (out of n = 140)
- 9 directors reported hiring applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Hindi/Urdu (out of n = 76)
- 9 directors reported hiring applicants who were reading and/or writing proficient in Ukrainian (out of n = 73)
- Less than seven directors reported hiring individuals who were reading and/or writing proficient in the following languages:
  - Polish (out of n = 72),
  - Arabic (out of n = 73),
  - Russian (out of n = 72),
  - Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin (out of n = 72),
  - French (out of n = 71),
  - Farsi (out of n = 71),
  - Korean (out of n = 69),
  - Vietnamese (out of n = 68),
  - Japanese (out of n = 68),
  - German (out of n = 69), and
  - Hebrew (out of n = 68).

### **Attraction to Child Care Careers and Employment**

To explore why many may be disinclined to child care as a career option, directors were asked to rate a list of potential deterrents on a scale of importance from 1 (“Not Important”) to 5 (“Very Important”). “Salaries are low” and “Benefits are not adequate” (both with a median of 5.0 and a mean greater than or equal to 4.5) were listed as the top two reasons that deterred people from the field of early care and education. Other reasons which yielded a mean or median of 4.0 or higher were: “Career opportunities are better in other professions or other child-oriented settings,” and “Child care does not have a well-known career pathway.” These results are consistent with previous Salary and Staffing Survey reports and are shown below in Table 21.

**Table 21. Reasons Applicants Not Attracted to Employment in Child Care**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Responding Centers</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
<b>Salaries are low.</b>	307	4.6	5
<b>Benefits are not adequate.</b>	298	4.5	5
<b>Career opportunities are better in other professions or other child-oriented settings.</b>	288	4.1	4
<b>Child care does not have a well-known career pathway.</b>	284	3.6	4

Reason	Responding Centers	Mean	Median
<b>Job seekers are looking for remote and/or hybrid job opportunities.</b>	282	3.2	3
<b>Career opportunities in centers are not known.</b>	273	3	3
<b>Job openings in centers are not well advertised.</b>	277	2.9	3

Several directors expressed concern about the reasons they believe people are not attracted to working in a child care center. A few shared:

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*“The qualifications are very high compared to the pay. For many, if they have the qualifications, they will look for a school district to work in before an Early Childhood Center as the pay, benefits, and schedule is much better.”*

*“Providing child care is a very responsible and stressful job for a lot of people. Possible compensation in salaries and benefits are not satisfactory.”*

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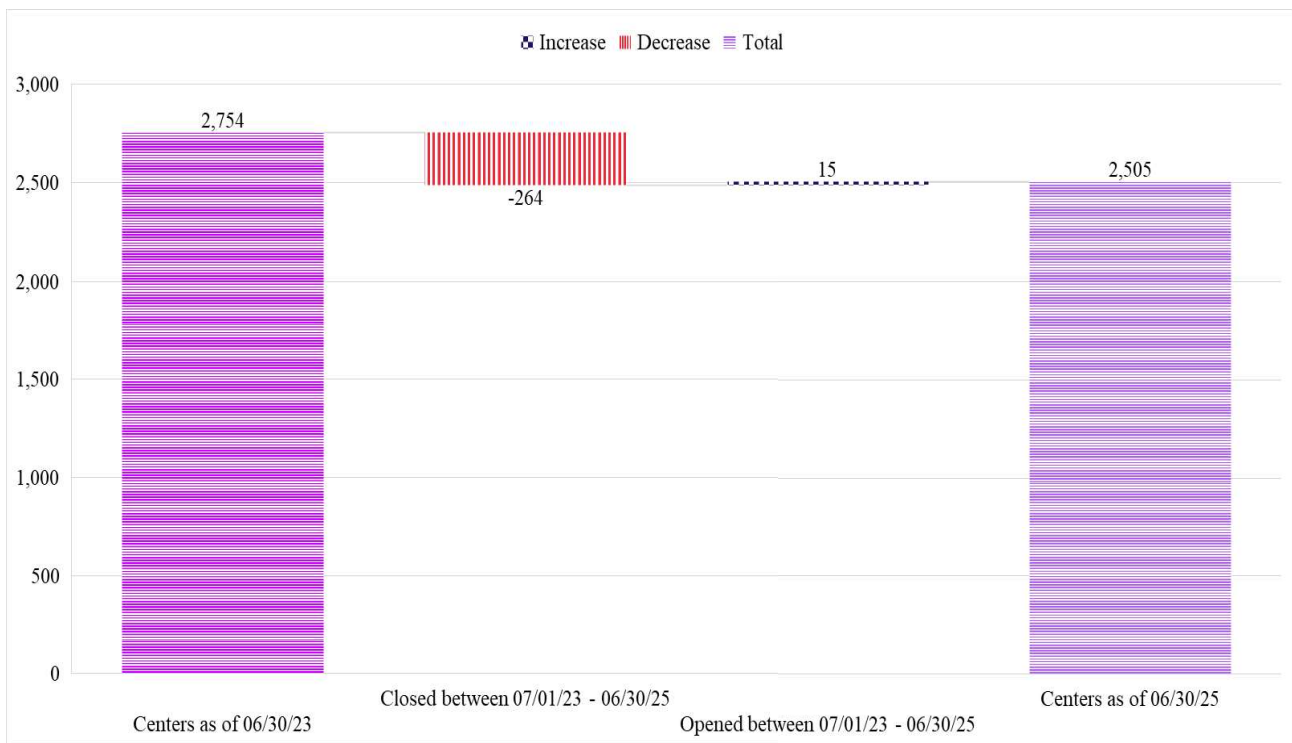
## Center Turnover

In order to evaluate center turnover, this report looked at the number of programs in the statewide provider database on two separate occasions. The number of centers actively providing care on June 30, 2023 (June 30 represents the end of a fiscal year) was compared to the number in that same category on June 30, 2025. Table 22 displays the number of centers who were active in the database as of 06/30/2023, the number of new centers who were lost and added to the database between 07/01/2023 and 06/30/2025, and the number of centers who were active in the provider database as of June 30, 2025. As Table 22 shows, there was a decrease in both the number of center providers (Figure 15) and total licensed capacity (Figure 16) for the two-year period.

**Table 22. Provider and Capacity Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Child Care Centers**

Population	Centers as of 06/30/2023	Lost due to centers closing between 07/01/2023 to 06/30/2025	Gained due to centers opening between 07/01/2023 to 06/30/2025	Centers as of 06/30/2025	Net Change 2023 to 2025
Active Providers	2,754	-264	15	2,505	-9.04%
Total Licensed Capacity	236,341	-19,257	1,547	220,144	-6.85%

**Figure 15. Active Provider Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Child Care Centers**



**Figure 16. Total licensed Capacity Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Child Care Centers**

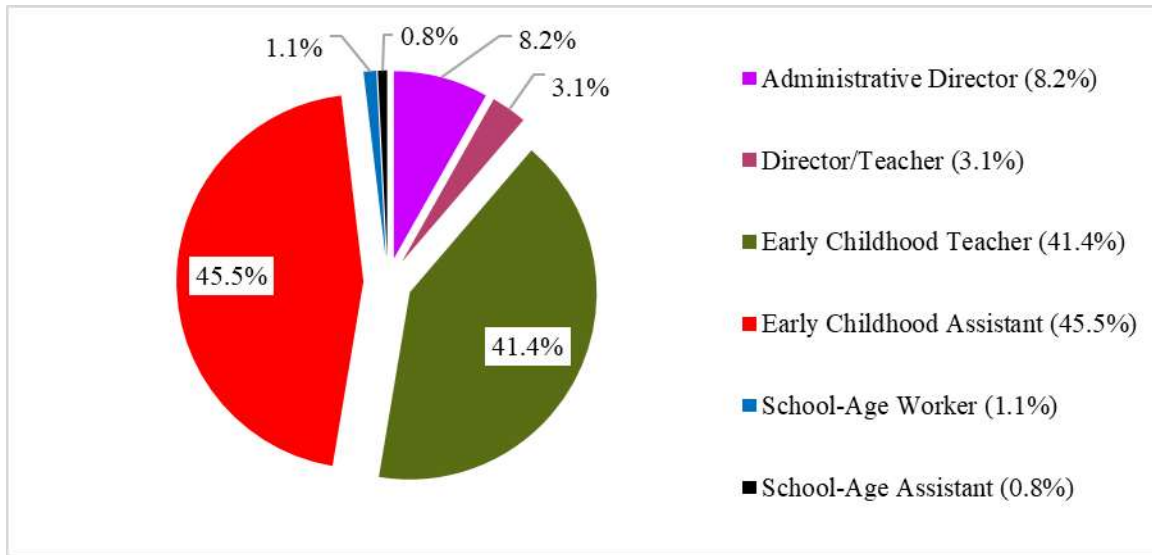


## Staff Demographics

The Gateways to Opportunity Registry, a database for the child care workforce in Illinois, launched in July 2009. In September 2012, DCFS mandated that all licensed child care center and family child care home providers/staff join and maintain membership in the Gateways Registry. Mandated membership allows the Gateways Registry to capture information for all child care staff, including various staff demographics (personal demographics and career demographics, including start date, position, etc.), education, wages, and certifications. For that reason, the supplemental worksheet that was formerly used to gather this information was discontinued in FY 2015, and administrative data from the Gateways Registry were used in its place. This FY 2025 report continues with the same methodology.

According to the Gateways Registry, there are 63,300 individuals working in licensed child care centers in Illinois and 55,845 in DCFS defined positions. Figure 17 and Table 23 show the number of child care center employees per DCFS position as a percentage.

**Figure 17. Percentage of Employees per DCFS Defined Position (n = 55,845)**



**Table 23. Number and Percentage of Employees per DCFS Defined Position (n = 55,845)**

Position	Employees	Percentages
<b>Administrative Director</b>	4,574	8.2%
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	1,731	3.1%
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	23,099	41.4%
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	25,382	45.5%
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	636	1.1%
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	423	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	55,845	100.0%

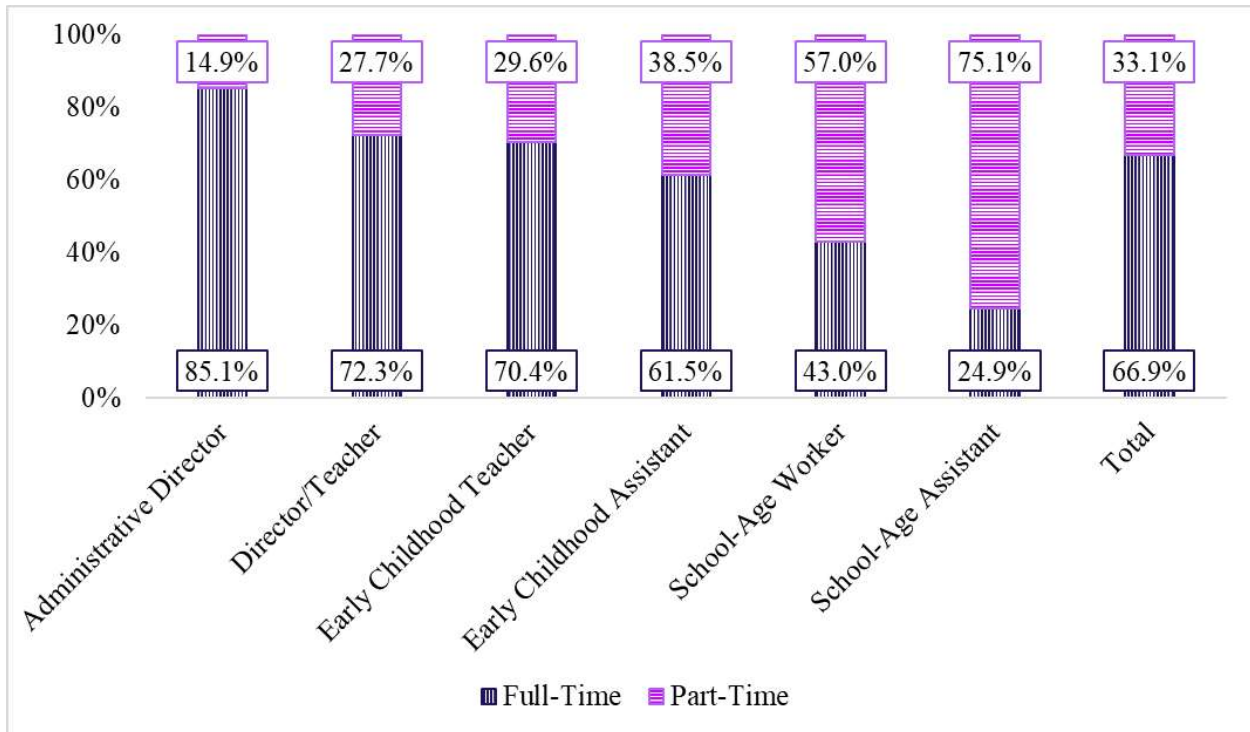
Figure and Table should be read: “Of all center employees, 45.8% are Early Childhood Assistants.”

For the purposes of this survey full-time employment was defined as 40 hours per week and anything less was considered part-time.<sup>20</sup> (Neither the Illinois Department of Labor nor the federal Fair Labor Standards Act<sup>21</sup> distinguishes between part-time and full-time employees.) When completing the Gateways Registry membership form, individuals were asked to indicate the number of hours worked per week. Results indicate that overall, 66.9 percent of listed employees were defined as full-time and 33.1 percent as part-time. Figure 18 and Table 24 show the breakdown of full- and part-time employees by position.

<sup>20</sup>The work week was defined as 40 hours because the survey delineates a full day as 8 hours/day.

<sup>21</sup> “The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does not define full-time employment or part-time employment. This is a matter generally to be determined by the employer.” U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/workhours/full-time>

**Figure 18. Percentage of Full-Time and Part-Time Employees by Position**



**Table 24. Percentage of Full-Time and Part-Time Employees by Position**

Position	Full-Time	Part-Time	n
<b>Administrative Director</b>	85.1%	14.9%	3,917
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	72.3%	27.7%	1,452
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	70.4%	29.6%	19,942
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	61.5%	38.5%	22,950
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	43.0%	57.0%	458
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	24.9%	75.1%	354
<b>Total</b>	66.9%	33.1%	49,073

Figure and Table should be read: “85.1 percent of administrative directors were full-time whereas 14.9 percent were part time.”

### Education and Credentials

Through the Gateways Registry, individuals are required to report their educational achievements and can make additions at any time. In addition, they can also report credentials

and certifications they have earned, such as the Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood endorsement.<sup>22</sup> The educational requirements necessary to be director- or teacher-qualified (see Appendix C) are stipulated in the DCFS licensing standards for day care centers, though some programs and public funding streams require more advanced levels of education. In summary, directors can qualify through 64 semester hours of coursework from an accredited college or university [21 semester hours must be directly related to child care (ECE) or child development (CD)], and either a Gateways to Opportunity Level 1 Illinois Director Credential or 3 semester hours of college credit or 3 points of credential approved training in administration, leadership, or management. Similarly, early childhood teachers can either complete 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of coursework from an accredited college or university (six semester or nine quarter hours must be directly related to ECE or CD) or qualify through a combination of education and work experience. Directors of school-age programs and school-age workers are required to have coursework directly related to school-age child care, child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping, or other related fields.

Table 25 shows that 92.4 of all administrative directors attained some level of college education. Exactly 73.2 percent of early childhood teachers attained some level of college education. Of the 73.2 percent, 38.2 percent achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher, and of early childhood teachers with a bachelor’s degree or higher, 6.8 percent reported having a Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood endorsement (both exceeds licensing standards for that position). Lastly, 22.2 percent achieved an associate degree.

Nearly one quarter of early childhood teachers (22.4 percent) earned a degree in early childhood education or child development (ECE/CD)<sup>23</sup>. Almost one-third (30.5 percent) of early childhood assistants and one-quarter (25.8 percent) of school-age assistants had received education beyond a high school degree or a GED.

**Table 25. Center Staff Educational Attainment by Position (Column Percentages)**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	<b>All Positions</b>
<b>High School Diploma/GED</b>	7.3%	5.9%	22.0%	69.5%	48.3%	74.4%	41.8%

<sup>22</sup> Known previously as a Type 04 (early childhood) teaching certificate, the PEL with an early childhood endorsement is granted by the Illinois State Board of Education to educators who have earned a BA degree in early childhood and passed all state exams and requirements to teach in a publicly funded program serving children birth through age eight.

<sup>23</sup> This figure is likely under-reported as records that did not have a major listed were coded as “other” for purposes of this analysis.

Education Level	Admin. Director	Director/Teacher	Early Childhood Teacher	Early Childhood Assistant	School-Age Worker	School-Age Assistant	All Positions
CDA, CCP <sup>1</sup> or Montessori credential <sup>2</sup>	0.3%	0.1%	4.8%	1.1%	2.2%	0.6%	2.6%
Some College in ECE/CD <sup>3</sup> , no degree	4.3%	4.6%	6.4%	2.0%	4.3%	0.9%	4.2%
Some College in other field, no degree	0.9%	1.4%	3.0%	3.5%	5.8%	1.7%	3.0%
Approved Community College ECE Certificate	1.8%	2.7%	3.5%	1.1%	1.5%	0.3%	2.2%
Associate's in ECE/CD	14.2%	22.4%	12.1%	2.3%	3.2%	0.6%	8.1%
Associate's in other field	7.7%	10.7%	10.1%	6.0%	8.8%	8.0%	8.1%
Bachelor's in ECE/CD	14.0%	13.1%	8.2%	0.6%	2.3%	0.3%	5.4%
Bachelor's in other field	26.1%	23.1%	21.6%	11.4%	18.8%	12.5%	17.4%
Master's in ECE/CD	9.2%	5.9%	2.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.0%	1.9%
Master's in other field	14.2%	10.1%	6.3%	2.3%	4.0%	0.9%	5.3%
N	4,456	1,681	22,228	23,134	600	352	52,451

Table should be read, "Out of 4,456 administrative directors for whom education and credential information is available, 14.2 percent had a Master's degree in a field other than early childhood education or child development."

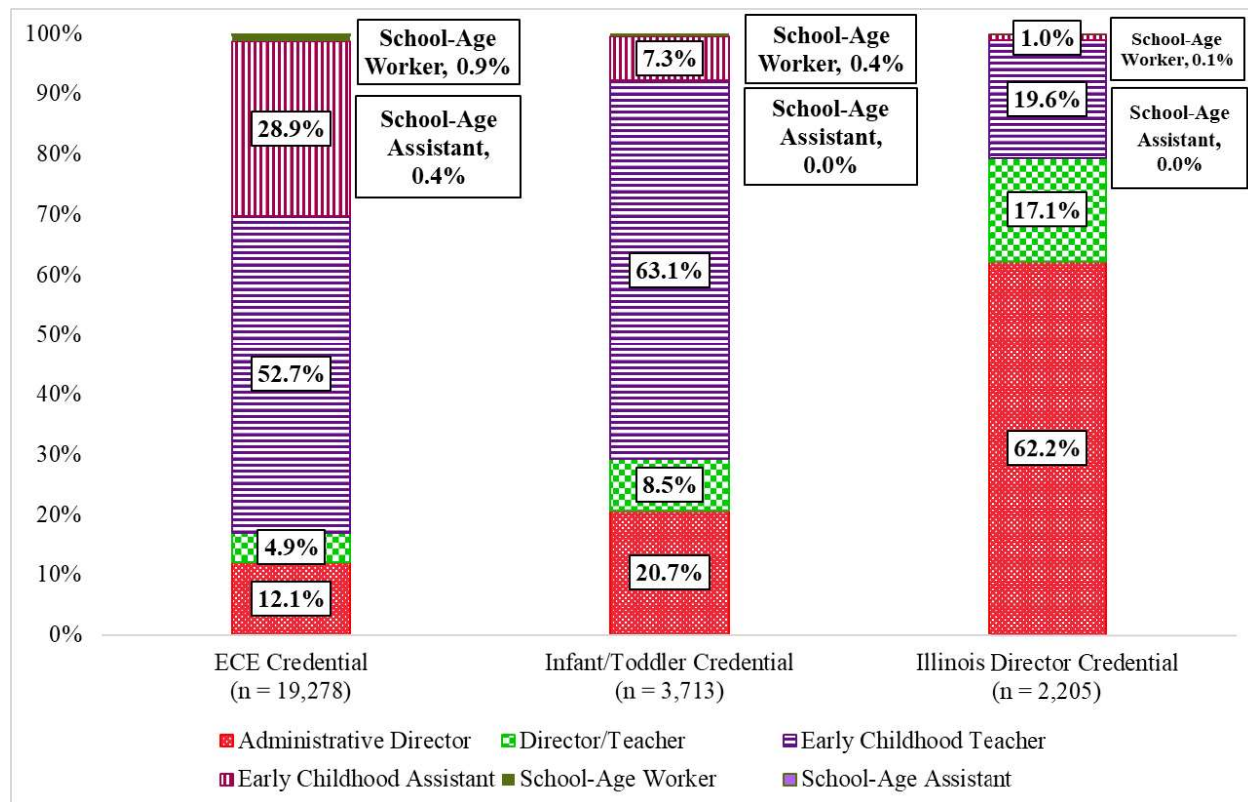
<sup>1</sup>CDA is the acronym for Child Development Associate; CCP is the acronym for Child Care Professional

<sup>2</sup>American Montessori Society or Association Montessori International

<sup>3</sup>ECE is the acronym for early childhood education; CD is the acronym for child development.

Several Gateways to Opportunity Credentials are available for individuals working in the field of ECE, as shown in Figure 19 and Table 26. The figure and table show that 52.7% of staff with an ECE Credential, 63.1% of staff with an Infant/Toddler Credential, and 19.6% of staff with an Illinois Director Credential are early childhood teachers. These credentials recognize the education, experience, and professional contributions of early childhood practitioners. Gateways Credentials are also a key component of ExceleRate Illinois, the state's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS). The ExceleRate Illinois Circles of Quality, above the Licensed Circle, require that a percentage of personnel have achieved a Gateways Credential.

**Figure 19. Positions Held by Staff with Gateways Credentials**



**Table 26. Positions Held by Staff with Gateways Credentials**

Gateways Credential	Admin. Director	Director/Teacher	Early Childhood Teacher	Early Childhood Assistant	School-Age Worker	School-Age Assistant	N
<b>ECE Credential</b>	12.1%	4.9%	52.7%	28.9%	0.9%	0.4%	19,278
<b>Infant/Toddler Credential</b>	20.7%	8.5%	63.1%	7.3%	0.4%	0.0%	3,713
<b>Illinois Director Credential</b>	62.2%	17.1%	19.6%	1.0%	0.1%	0.0%	2,205

*Note: Gateways Credentials may be earned by individuals in other settings (e.g., family child care) or by those no longer working in direct care. The “N” for this table represents only Gateways Credentials attained by individuals in these specified positions within licensed centers.*

*Figure and Table should be read “12.1% of staff with an ECE Credential are administrative directors.”*

## Duration of Employment with Current Employer

Gateways Registry members are required to add employment information at least annually, however updates can be made at any time. Directors are also able to update employees who have left by adding an end date to their employment. A piece of data that is collected is the start date of their employment to indicate how long individuals have been employed in their current place of employment. Table 27 shows that among all child care practitioners, the average years employed by their current employer was 4.1 years (median = 1.8 years). This is consistent with the mean of 4.3 years (median = 1.7 years) reported in FY 2023. Administrative directors and director/teacher have been employed in the same program for longer than early childhood teachers and school-age workers, who in turn have been employed longer than early childhood assistants and school-age assistants.

**Table 27. Number of Years Employed by Current Employer**

Position	Mean	Median	n	Range
Administrative Director	9.3	6.1	4,569	0-59
Director/Teacher	9.3	6.4	1,722	0-50.8
Early Childhood Teacher	5.0	2.6	23,067	0-51.8
Early Childhood Assistant	2.1	1.1	25,280	0-49.6
School-Age Worker	4.2	1.8	633	0-41.8
School-Age Assistant	1.9	1.1	398	0-15.1
Total	4.1	1.8	55,669	0-59

## Salary and Wages

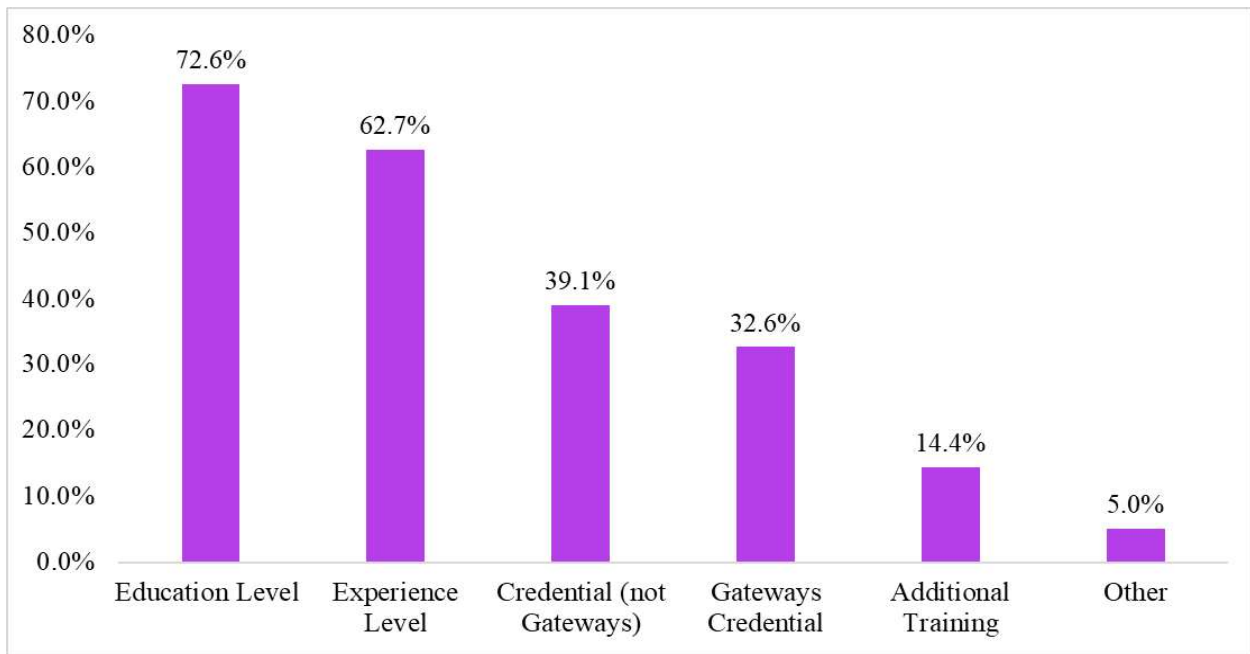
### Pay Scale

Compensation practices are a critical component of stability and quality in ECE programs. As part of the main survey instrument (online and paper), directors were asked to indicate whether their program maintains a pay scale that is shared with staff. Of the 402 directors who responded to this item, 68.9 percent (n = 277) indicated that such a pay scale exists. Furthermore, Figure 20 illustrates directors' responses regarding the differentiation of pay scales:

- 72.6 percent (n = 292) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated by level of education,
- 62.7 percent (n = 252) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated by level of experience,
- 39.1 percent (n = 157) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated by attainment of an industry-recognized credential (other than a Gateways Credential), such as a CDA or professional educator license (PEL),

- 32.6 percent (n = 131) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated by attainment of a Gateways Credential,
- 14.4 percent (n = 58) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated by additional or supplemental training, and
- 5.0 percent (n = 20) of respondents reported a pay scale differentiated on some other basis. Other pay scales were based on job title/position description, minimum wage/wage floor, grant, and performance.

**Figure 20. Differentiating Factors in Salary Scale**



### Hourly Wage by Position

As part of the Gateways Registry, individuals have the option to report their hourly wages and/or annual salary with their employment data. Based on the wage data in the Gateways Registry, the average hourly wage for staff across all job positions (n = 41,964) was \$18.69 (median = \$18.00) ( $F = 2,459.7, p < .001$ ). Table 28 depicts hourly wages by position.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 28. Mean and Median Hourly Wage by Position**

Position	Mean	Median	n
<b>Admin. Director</b>	\$26.37	\$23.08	2,773
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	\$22.54	\$20.22	1,292
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	\$19.62	\$19.00	17,468

<sup>24</sup> Reports prior to FY 2015 also collected wage data, but it was provided by the director completing the survey on behalf of their staff. Caution should be exercised if comparing data from reports prior to FY 2015.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	\$16.59	\$16.50	19,784
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	\$17.55	\$17.00	371
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	\$15.83	\$15.00	276

Table 28 indicates that the median hourly wages earned by early childhood assistants and school-age assistants were \$16.50 and \$15.00 respectively (the minimum wage in Illinois was \$15.00 in 2025).<sup>25</sup> Typically, these are positions in early childhood that require less education and experience to enter and yield compensation to match.

### **Comparison of Hourly Wages from FY 2015-FY 2025**

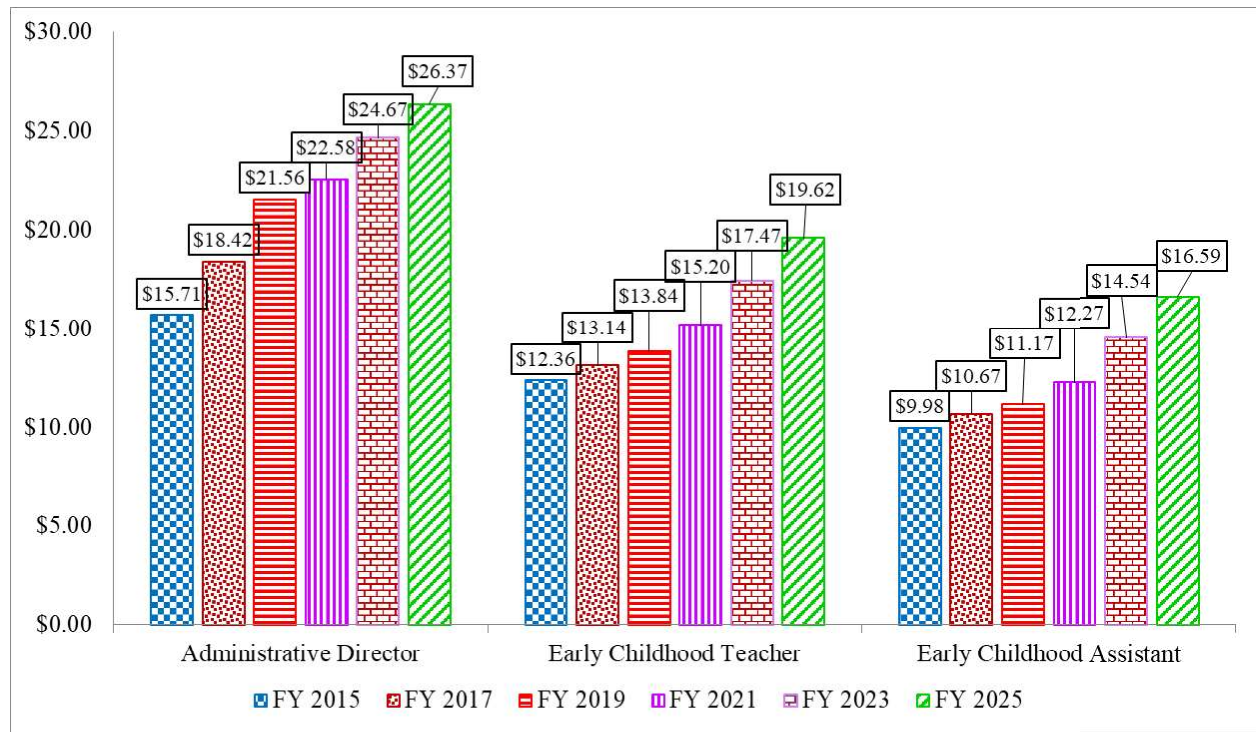
In Figure 21, the mean hourly wages for the positions of administrative director, early childhood teacher, and early childhood assistant are compared over time. These figures have not been adjusted for inflation. While wages have continuously increased since FY 2015, wages have not always exceeded rates of inflation. Prior to FY 2021, wages did not keep up with inflation, but since then, the increases in average hourly wage for administrative directors, early childhood teachers and early childhood assistants exceeded rates of inflation. More specifically, in 2025, administrative directors would need to earn \$21.50 per hour, early childhood teachers \$16.91 per hour, and early childhood assistants \$13.74 per hour to have the same buying power as \$15.71, \$12.36, and \$9.98 had back in 2015<sup>26</sup>, and each position is making more than those inflated values today.

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<sup>25</sup> “Minimum Wage Law”, *Illinois Department of Labor*, <https://labor.illinois.gov/laws-rules/fls/minimum-wage-law.html>

<sup>26</sup> CPI Inflation Calculator: <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>

**Figure 21. Comparison of Mean Hourly Wages: FY 2015 - FY 2025**



The salary data from the Gateways Registry can be compared to the most current Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).<sup>27</sup> Although the data may not be strictly comparable, especially as national data may include school-based positions, the national figures provide some context for interpreting the hourly wage of child care personnel in Illinois.

Three categories are primarily used by the BLS to include various child care positions. The categories are listed below, along with the descriptions provided on the BLS website. The mean and median hourly wages specified by the BLS are also included, followed in parenthesis by the mean and median hourly wages from Table 28.

Category 1 (11-9031): **Education Administrators, Preschool and Child Care Center/Program.** Description of position: “Plan, direct, or coordinate the academic and non-academic activities of preschool and child care centers or programs.” As of May 2024, the mean hourly wage for this position was \$26.37 and the median was \$23.36 (Illinois’ mean and median wages are roughly equivalent: mean = \$26.37; median = \$23.08).

<sup>27</sup> From “May 2024 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates: Illinois”, *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcst.htm>

Category 2 (25-2011): **Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education**. Description of position: “Instruct preschool-aged children in activities designated to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth needed for primary school in preschool, day care center, or other child development facility.” As of May 2024, the mean and median hourly wage for preschool teachers was not available.<sup>28</sup>

Depending on the responsibilities of an assistant teacher, the position could fall under either the BLS category of **Teacher Assistants** or **Child Care Workers**.

Category 3 (25-9045): **Teacher Assistants**. Description of position: “Perform duties that are instructional in nature... and serve in a position for which a teacher has ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services.” As of May 2024, the mean hourly wage for an assistant teacher was not available.<sup>29</sup>

Category 4 (39-9011): **Child Care Workers**. Description of position: “Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and child care institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play.” As of May 2024, the mean hourly wage for a child care worker was \$16.62 and the median was \$15.80 (Illinois’ mean wage was roughly equivalent while the median was higher: mean = \$16.59; median = \$16.50).

### Hourly Wage by Full- Versus Part-Time Status

When we aggregate across all staff positions with wage data available in the Gateways Registry (n = 41,125) hourly wages are higher for full-time employees compared to part-time employees. Full-time employees averaged \$19.08 per hour compared to \$17.74 per hour for part-time staff. The median hourly wage for full-time staff was \$18.00 and part-time staff was \$17.00 per hour ( $F = 564.1, p < .001$ ). Table 29 shows the breakdown of hourly wages by position and employment status. The findings across all positions show that staff make more per hour when employed on a full-time versus part-time basis.

**Table 29. Hourly Wages by Position by Full- vs. Part-Time Status**

Position	Full-Time Mean	Full-Time Median	Full-Time n	Part-Time Mean	Part-Time Median	Part-Time n
<b>Administrative Director</b>	\$26.81	\$23.75	2,280	\$23.57	\$21.00	440

<sup>28</sup> Only annual wages are shown for this category in the BLS. Calculations to convert to an hourly wage would not be accurate due to lack of knowledge of the hours worked.

<sup>29</sup> Only annual wages are shown for this category in the BLS. Calculations to convert to an hourly wage would not be accurate due to lack of knowledge of the hours worked.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Full-Time Mean</b>	<b>Full-Time Median</b>	<b>Full-Time n</b>	<b>Part-Time Mean</b>	<b>Part-Time Median</b>	<b>Part-Time n</b>
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	\$22.86	\$20.98	871	\$21.25	\$19.97	335
<b>Teacher</b>	\$19.71	\$19.00	12,237	\$19.25	\$18.50	4,911
<b>Assistant Teacher</b>	\$16.76	\$17.00	12,117	\$16.29	\$16.00	7,306
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	\$17.73	\$17.19	159	\$17.12	\$16.76	198
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	\$16.48	\$15.50	71	\$15.61	\$15.00	200

### Staff Experience and Education

Table 30 (n = 41,964;  $F = 7.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ) reveals that higher wages accompany increased years of employment with the same employer. Table 31 shows wages typically increase as level of education increases, aligned with reports from the majority of directors that they use a wage scale that considers years of experience and education.

**Table 30. Hourly Wages by Years Employed with Current Employer by Position (n = 41,964)**

<b>Years Employed Statistic</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>0-2 years Mean</b>	\$26.14	\$22.22	\$19.27	\$16.46	\$17.34	\$15.82
<b>0-2 years Median</b>	\$22.50	\$20.00	\$18.50	\$16.35	\$17.00	\$15.00
<b>0-2 years n</b>	1,025	382	9,662	16,663	253	226
<b>3-5 years Mean</b>	\$25.86	\$21.81	\$19.55	\$17.01	\$17.13	\$16.61
<b>3-5 years Median</b>	\$23.00	\$20.46	\$19.00	\$17.00	\$17.00	\$16.00
<b>3-5 years n</b>	494	260	3,484	1,880	52	19
<b>6-9 years Mean</b>	\$27.20	\$22.20	\$20.09	\$17.56	\$17.57	\$15.99
<b>6-9 years Median</b>	\$24.00	\$20.00	\$19.25	\$17.25	\$17.05	\$16.00
<b>6-9 years n</b>	463	220	2,075	636	29	10
<b>10-15 years Mean</b>	\$26.52	\$22.70	\$20.52	\$17.90	\$19.61	\$17.44

<b>Years Employed Statistic</b>	<b>Admin. Director</b>	<b>Director/ Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	<b>School-Age Worker</b>	<b>School-Age Assistant</b>
<b>10-15 years Median</b>	\$24.00	\$20.00	\$19.50	\$17.50	\$19.25	\$17.00
<b>10-15 years n</b>	365	194	1,113	286	8	6
<b>16-20 years Mean</b>	\$25.82	\$23.34	\$20.71	\$17.86	\$17.48	-
<b>16-20 years Median</b>	\$23.50	\$21.67	\$20.00	\$17.25	\$17.20	-
<b>16-20 years n</b>	180	93	503	125	10	-
<b>21+ years Mean</b>	\$26.93	\$24.53	\$21.37	\$18.61	\$21.64	-
<b>21+ years Median</b>	\$24.25	\$22.00	\$20.46	\$18.00	\$19.29	-
<b>21+ years n</b>	244	137	607	124	16	-

*Note: Statistics for which there were fewer than three observations were deleted.*

**Table 31. Hourly Wages by Education by Position (n = 39,386)**

Level of Education Statistic	Admin. Director	Director/Teacher	Early Childhood Teacher	Early Childhood Assistant	School-Age Worker	School -Age Assistant	All Positions
High School/GED Mean	\$20.96	\$19.58	\$18.07	\$16.28	\$16.76	\$15.77	\$16.76
High School/GED Median	\$18.50	\$19.00	\$18.00	\$16.00	\$16.60	\$15.00	\$16.50
High School/GED n	225	83	3,929	12,842	184	168	17,431
Child Development Associate Mean	\$25.64	\$18.75	\$18.67	\$17.68	\$16.69	-	\$18.55
Child Development Associate Median	\$22.09	\$18.75	\$18.54	\$18.00	\$17.03	-	\$18.50
Child Development Associate n	8	1	859	168	6	-	1,043
Some College in ECE/CD, no degree Mean	\$23.95	\$21.92	\$18.85	\$17.24	\$17.69	-	\$19.03
Some College in ECE/CD, no degree Median	\$21.91	\$20.00	\$18.50	\$17.25	\$17.69	-	\$18.50
Some College in ECE/CD, no degree n	134	64	1,084	347	12	-	1,643
Some College in other field, no degree Mean	\$23.06	\$19.07	\$18.64	\$16.70	\$16.16	\$15.68	\$17.72
Some College in other field, no degree Median	\$21.00	\$18.00	\$18.50	\$17.00	\$15.43	\$16.00	\$17.50
Some College in other field, no degree n	28	19	516	598	20	3	1,184
Approved Community College ECE Cert. Mean	\$24.27	\$20.99	\$19.06	\$17.66	\$18.06	-	\$19.15
Approved Community College ECE Cert. Median	\$21.00	\$20.00	\$19.00	\$17.25	\$17.00	-	\$18.50
Approved Community College ECE Cert. n	53	40	613	187	5	-	899
Associate's in ECE/CD Mean	\$24.70	\$21.37	\$19.62	\$19.27	\$18.98	-	\$20.48
Associate's in ECE/CD Median	\$22.00	\$20.00	\$19.25	\$18.43	\$19.00	-	\$19.50
Associate's in ECE/CD n	458	304	2,055	339	4	-	3,162
Associate's in other field Mean	\$23.94	\$21.80	\$18.99	\$16.96	\$17.12	\$15.78	\$18.79
Associate's in other field Median	\$22.00	\$20.00	\$18.53	\$16.84	\$17.00	\$15.00	\$18.00
Associate's in other field n	241	140	1,728	1,026	28	21	3,184
Bachelor's in ECE/CD Mean	\$27.74	\$23.64	\$22.80	\$19.66	\$25.60	-	\$23.62
Bachelor's in ECE/CD Median	\$24.04	\$22.35	\$20.75	\$18.30	\$20.00	-	\$21.20
Bachelor's in ECE/CD n	363	154	1,180	102	9	-	1,809
Bachelor's in other field Mean	\$27.55	\$23.30	\$20.44	\$17.63	\$18.37	\$18.29	\$20.42
Bachelor's in other field Median	\$24.04	\$21.00	\$19.25	\$17.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$19.00
Bachelor's in other field n	694	289	3,541	2,032	65	26	6,647
Master's in ECE/CD Mean	\$30.96	\$26.18	\$26.75	\$20.16	\$18.89	-	\$27.81
Master's in ECE/CD Median	\$28.00	\$24.00	\$23.00	\$19.50	\$20.67	-	\$24.50
Master's in ECE/CD n	183	40	300	22	3	-	548
Master's in other field Mean	\$30.26	\$25.92	\$21.41	\$17.58	\$22.36	\$15.70	\$22.39
Master's in other field Median	\$27.11	\$22.00	\$20.00	\$17.00	\$18.00	\$15.60	\$20.00
Master's in other field n	312	121	990	395	15	3	1,836

*Note: Statistics for which there were fewer than three observations were deleted.*

Just as Table 30 demonstrates a logical pattern between hourly wage and number of years employed at the same program (generally, the longer one is employed at a site, the more one will get paid), Table 31 displays the logical pattern between hourly wage and education. Specifically, increased education and experience typically lead to higher hourly wages. In Table 31 ( $n = 39,385$ ;  $F = 822.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ), educational levels are defined by degree earned and the major field of study. For early childhood teachers and assistant teachers, those who hold a degree (associate, bachelor's, master's) in early childhood education (ECE) or child development (CD) earn significantly more than those who hold the same degree but in another field or major ( $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, early childhood teachers with a bachelor's in ECE make about \$3 more per hour compared to an early childhood teacher with an associate degree.

### Center Characteristics and Hourly Wage

Using administrative data on program quality from the DTP, variables were created to indicate the national accreditation and ExceleRate Illinois rating status of licensed child care center programs with staff in the Gateways Registry. These variables were examined in combination with wage data to determine whether there were any significant differences in wages between participating and non-participating programs.

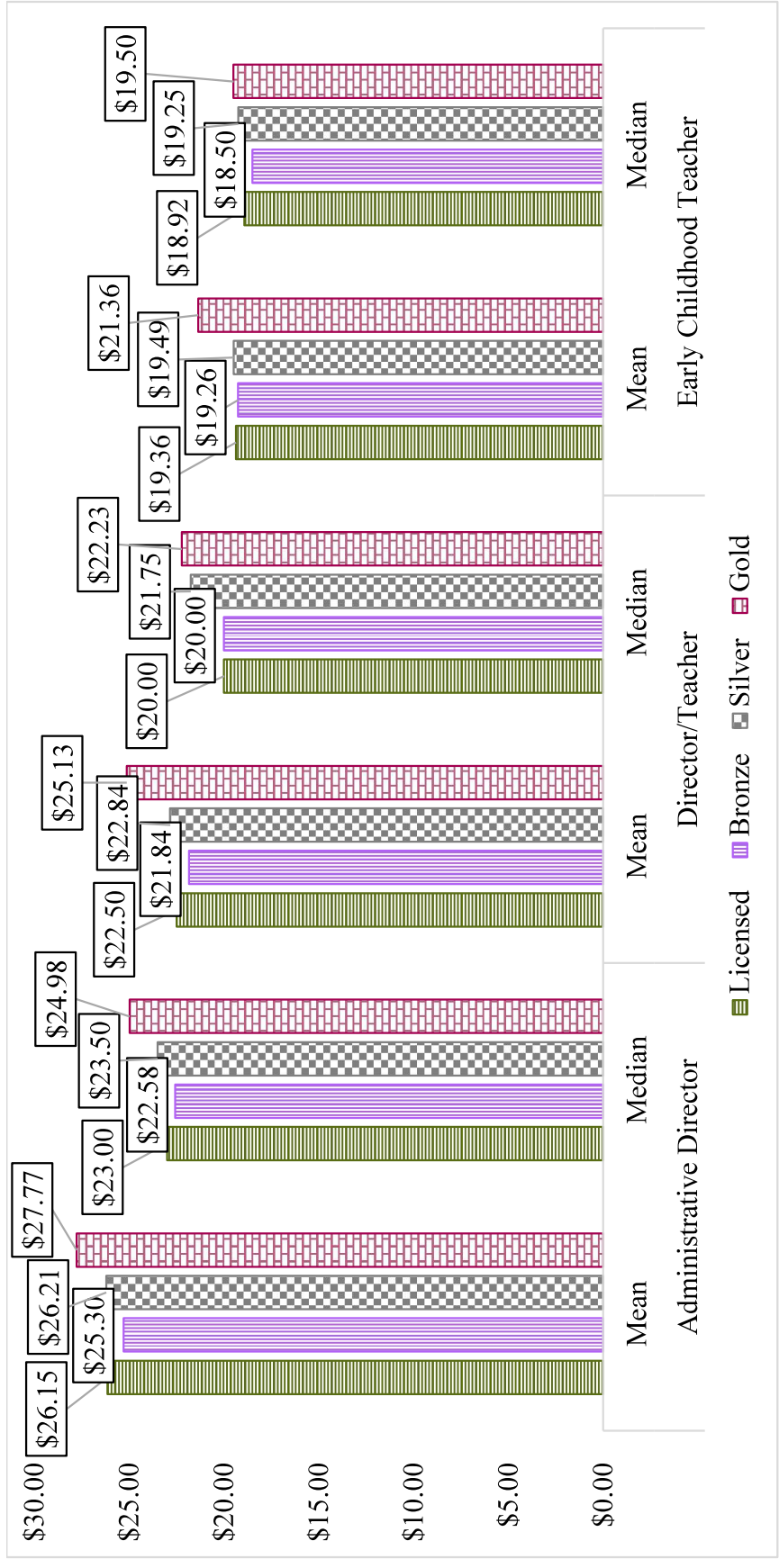
Accredited centers could hold accreditation from one of several early care and education associations: the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation, the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, the National Accreditation Commission Accreditation, the Council on Accreditation, the Cognia Accreditation, and the American Montessori Society Accreditation. A center was considered accredited if they had one or more of the former accreditations. Table 32 demonstrates that, overall, there was not a significant difference in the wages paid by accredited versus non-accredited centers. Accredited centers do not pay staff significantly more (mean = \$18.74; median = \$17.50) than non-accredited centers (mean = \$18.67; median = \$18.00) ( $F = 1.49$ ,  $p = 0.2$ ).

**Table 32. Hourly Wages by Position by Accreditation Status**

Position	Accredited Mean	Not Accredited Median	Accredited Not n	Accredited Mean	Accredited Median	Accredited n
<b>Administrative Director</b>	\$25.95	\$23.00	2,319	\$28.49	\$24.52	454
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	\$22.38	\$20.00	1,193	\$24.50	\$22.10	99
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	\$19.46	\$19.00	13,703	\$20.19	\$19.01	3,765
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	\$16.67	\$16.50	15,521	\$16.34	\$16.00	4,263
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	\$17.24	\$17.00	296	\$18.77	\$17.25	75
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	\$15.64	\$15.00	216	\$16.50	\$16.00	60

The ExceleRate Illinois QRIS recognizes program quality achievements of child care providers. The system has Circles of Quality which providers can achieve by meeting required criteria for each circle. Licensed child care centers who have earned the Gold Circle of Quality have reached the highest level of ExceleRate Illinois.<sup>30</sup> Hourly wage and position of employees in the Gateways Registry were compared to the level of ExceleRate Illinois participation the employee's center had reached. The comparisons can be seen in Figure 22 and Table 33 and show that Silver and Gold Circles of Quality have higher wages than Licensed and Bronze.

**Figure 22. Hourly Wages by Position by ExceleRate Illinois Participation Status**



<sup>30</sup> See the ExceleRate Illinois website for more information: <https://www.ExceleRate.IllinoisIllinois.com/>

**Table 33. Hourly Wages by Position by ExceleRate Illinois Participation Status (n = 33,914)**

Circle of Quality	Administrative Director Mean	Administrative Director Median	Administrative Director n	Director/Teacher Mean	Director/Teacher Median	Director/Teacher n	Early Childhood Teacher Mean	Early Childhood Teacher Median	Early Childhood Teacher n	Early Childhood Assistant Mean	Early Childhood Assistant Median	Early Childhood Assistant n
<b>Licensed</b>	\$26.16	\$23.00	1,866	\$22.50	\$20.00	895	\$19.36	\$18.92	11,075	\$16.54	\$16.50	12,870
<b>Bronze</b>	\$25.31	\$22.58	26	\$21.84	\$20.00	27	\$19.26	\$18.50	214	\$16.81	\$17.00	221
<b>Silver</b>	\$26.21	\$23.00	153	\$22.84	\$21.75	61	\$19.49	\$19.25	1,579	\$16.61	\$17.00	1,456
<b>Gold</b>	\$27.77	\$24.99	138	\$25.13	\$22.23	36	\$21.36	\$19.50	1,323	\$16.86	\$16.26	1,472

As shown in Figure 22, there was an overall significant difference in the wages paid by ExceleRate Illinois participating licensed child care centers based on level of quality ( $F = 35.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with wages being highest in programs with a Gold Circle of Quality.<sup>31</sup> It was noted that geographic regions of the centers might drive some higher Circles of Quality to have lower average salaries than lower Circles of Quality. For instance, 36.1 percent of centers with Bronze Circle of Quality are in City of Chicago and only 14.1 percent are in Central Illinois, whereas 11.0 percent of centers with the Silver Circle of Quality are in City of Chicago and 24.9 percent are in Central Illinois.

When aggregating across all employees and investigating hourly wages by legal status, non-profit programs paid a significantly higher mean hourly wage than for-profit programs. Across all employees, non-profit staff averaged \$19.38 (median = \$18.00) per hour as compared to for-profit staff who averaged \$18.09 per hour (median = \$17.50) ( $F = 102.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Table 34 depicts hourly wage by position and legal status (for profit vs. non-profit) which indicates that mean and median hourly rates are higher in non-profit programs for all positions except for school-age worker and assistant positions.

**Table 34. Hourly Wages by Position by Center Profit Status (n = 7,060)**

Position	For Profit Mean	For Profit Median	For Profit n (staff)	Not For Profit Mean	Not For Profit Median	Not For Profit n (staff)
<b>Administrative Director</b>	\$25.31	\$22.95	249	\$27.96	\$25.00	208
<b>Director/Teacher</b>	\$21.18	\$20.00	140	\$23.21	\$20.45	91
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b>	\$18.70	\$18.50	1,702	\$20.33	\$19.00	1,320
<b>Early Childhood Assistant</b>	\$16.45	\$16.50	1,968	\$16.87	\$16.50	1,273
<b>School-Age Worker</b>	\$17.39	\$17.25	38	\$16.25	\$15.25	25

<sup>31</sup> There was no significant difference in wages in Bronze and Silver Circles of Quality.

<b>Position</b>	<b>For Profit Mean</b>	<b>For Profit Median</b>	<b>For Profit n (staff)</b>	<b>Not For Profit Mean</b>	<b>Not For Profit Median</b>	<b>Not For Profit n (staff)</b>
<b>School-Age Assistant</b>	\$15.65	\$15.80	20	\$14.45	\$14.00	26

One of the primary functions of the survey is to calculate the mean and median hourly wage by region. CCR&R Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) are used here to define the word “region.” The mean and median hourly wages earned by all DCFS defined positions by SDA are presented in Table 35.

**Table 35. Hourly Wages by Position by Service Delivery Area (SDA) (n = 41,964)**

SDA	Admin. Dir. Mean	Admin. Dir. Median	Admin. Dir. n	Dir./Teacher Mean	Dir./Teacher Median	Dir./Teacher n	EC Teacher Mean	EC Teacher Median	EC Teacher n	EC Assistant Mean	EC Assistant Median	EC Assistant n	SA Worker Mean	SA Worker Median	SA Worker n	SA Assistant Mean	SA Assistant Median	SA Assistant n
<b>1. Rockford</b>	\$22.55	\$21.10	47	\$21.96	\$20.50	19	\$18.30	\$18.50	344	\$15.89	\$15.81	329	\$16.70	\$16.00	11	\$14.16	\$13.75	7
<b>2. DeKalb</b>	\$26.49	\$23.00	89	\$22.01	\$20.21	48	\$18.32	\$18.50	789	\$15.89	\$15.48	806	\$18.62	\$18.88	8	\$14.24	\$14.00	17
<b>4. Addison</b>	\$28.02	\$24.15	495	\$23.82	\$21.50	190	\$19.60	\$19.25	3,405	\$16.51	\$16.25	3,301	\$18.05	\$17.50	41	\$16.14	\$16.25	24
<b>5. Joliet</b>	\$27.12	\$23.53	217	\$21.64	\$20.00	78	\$18.60	\$18.50	1,389	\$16.19	\$16.00	1,584	\$17.97	\$18.00	22	\$15.85	\$15.00	11
<b>6. Chicago</b>	\$27.30	\$24.03	1,274	\$23.47	\$21.00	604	\$20.89	\$19.25	7,297	\$17.35	\$17.00	8,476	\$18.25	\$17.37	188	\$16.55	\$16.00	149
<b>7. Moline</b>	\$22.44	\$20.67	61	\$21.42	\$19.40	24	\$18.12	\$18.25	386	\$15.75	\$16.00	377	\$16.26	\$15.25	13	\$15.20	\$14.00	7
<b>8. Peoria</b>	\$23.66	\$21.54	106	\$21.08	\$20.00	52	\$17.88	\$18.00	712	\$15.37	\$15.00	743	\$15.38	\$15.00	28	\$14.29	\$14.00	14
<b>9. Bloomington</b>	\$25.88	\$23.07	37	\$20.73	\$19.29	16	\$18.37	\$17.50	244	\$15.00	\$14.50	482	\$15.50	\$15.50	8	\$14.20	\$14.25	11
<b>10. Urbana</b>	\$25.78	\$22.11	79	\$21.28	\$20.00	37	\$18.77	\$18.50	591	\$15.99	\$16.00	714	\$16.49	\$17.00	13	\$15.36	\$15.00	7
<b>11. Charleston</b>	\$22.34	\$22.90	17	\$19.47	\$18.50	16	\$17.56	\$18.25	131	\$16.50	\$16.00	123	17.38	17	5	-	-	-
<b>12. Quincy</b>	\$25.66	\$23.00	19	\$27.97	\$28.54	3	\$18.86	\$18.41	202	\$16.06	\$15.92	144	\$17.13	\$18.88	3	\$16.00	\$15.00	5
<b>13. Springfield</b>	\$22.02	\$20.75	79	\$19.83	\$19.50	27	\$18.05	\$18.25	485	\$15.90	\$16.00	653	\$15.77	\$15.75	9	\$15.43	\$15.00	7
<b>14. Granite City</b>	\$22.28	\$20.50	139	\$20.11	\$19.00	103	\$17.89	\$18.00	876	\$15.56	\$15.00	1,210	\$16.13	\$15.88	16	\$14.16	\$14.00	11
<b>15. Mt Vernon</b>	\$23.22	\$21.63	45	\$20.80	\$19.00	30	\$17.92	\$18.25	275	\$16.18	\$16.18	374	-	-	-	\$15.33	\$16.00	3
<b>16. Cartersville</b>	\$22.47	\$21.69	68	\$20.16	\$19.97	45	\$17.96	\$18.25	341	\$15.82	\$16.00	467	\$16.00	\$16.25	4	-	-	-

*Note: Statistics for which there were fewer than three observations were deleted. Also, it should be noted that the Illinois minimum wage as of Jan 1, 2025 was \$15, up from \$14 in 2024. Any wages noted below this level may be the result of a lag in wage updates on the Gateways to Opportunity Registry.*

*I. SDAs 3 and 4 were combined for this report.*

Several directors commented about the inadequate salaries offered to child care personnel:

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*“It is so hard to keep staff because they want more pay, and I am a small center. I can't afford to pay staff more money. As the owner, I am not earning enough money for myself.”*

*“We have a very low staff turnover rate as we treat our employees very well. However, I really wish we could afford to pay staff way more, but we can only pay based on parent tuition. It is very difficult.”*

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## Benefits

To understand the range and distribution of benefits to inform program improvement efforts in centers, directors were asked about the types of benefits available to their employees. Beginning with FY 2017, the survey included an expanded list of benefits to get a more complete picture of what is offered in licensed center-based settings. In addition, the question was asked regarding benefits offered to full-time staff vs. part-time staff. As Table 36 shows, over 90 percent of responding centers offered paid holidays, written personnel policies available to employees, and annual performance evaluations to full-time employees. Additionally, over 80 percent offered paid sick days, a secure place for teachers' belongings, paid personal/vacation days, and a separate staff area for breaks, lunch, and staff resources. In terms of wage increases, 78.4 percent of centers offered periodic increases in wages based on educational attainment and 72.6 percent offered performance-based increases, while 70.4 percent offered yearly cost-of-living increases. Almost three-quarters offered reduced child care to their employees and nearly one-third offered free child care. Close to 79 percent offered payment or reimbursement for educational or training expenses.<sup>32</sup> While over half of the responding centers offer health insurance, retirement plans/pensions, and dental insurance, less than half offer disability or life insurance to full-time staff. Table 37 shows the benefits offered to part-time staff.

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<sup>32</sup> Professionalizing the early childhood field and workforce is supported by various state initiatives. Center-paid educational stipends help staff meet their DCFS requirement of 15 training hours per calendar year as well as assist centers to meet qualifications for an ExceleRate Illinois Circle of Quality. Some educational opportunities can be reimbursed through Professional Development and Improvement Funds. Money is also available through the Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program to help child care practitioners meet their educational goals.

**Table 36. Benefits Offered to Full-Time Staff**

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Programs Responding</b>	<b>Programs Offering Benefit</b>	<b>% Programs Offering Benefit</b>
<b>Paid Holidays</b>	362	348	96.1%
<b>Written Personnel Policies Available to Employee</b>	346	330	95.4%
<b>Annual Performance Evaluation</b>	344	310	90.1%
<b>Paid Sick Days</b>	357	319	89.4%
<b>Secure Place for Teachers' Belongings</b>	339	291	85.8%
<b>Paid Personal/Vacation Days</b>	339	284	83.8%
<b>Separate Staff Area for Breaks, Lunch, Staff Resources</b>	344	278	80.8%
<b>Payment/Reimbursement for Educational or Training Expenses</b>	338	266	78.7%
<b>Wage Increase for Educational Advance</b>	334	262	78.4%
<b>Reduced Child Care Fees</b>	338	246	72.8%
<b>Performance-Based Wage Increases</b>	332	241	72.6%
<b>Cost-of-Living Wage Increases</b>	328	231	70.4%
<b>Paid Time Off for Trainings</b>	342	240	70.2%
<b>Wage Increase for Credential Attainment</b>	326	223	68.4%
<b>Retirement or Pension Plan</b>	329	214	65.0%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	330	193	58.5%
<b>Formal Mentoring/Coaching</b>	314	172	54.8%
<b>Dental Insurance</b>	323	170	52.6%
<b>Life Insurance</b>	320	159	49.7%
<b>Disability Insurance</b>	318	145	45.6%
<b>Free Child Care</b>	331	104	31.4%

**Table 37. Benefits Offered to Part-Time Staff**

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Programs Responding</b>	<b>Programs Offering Benefit</b>	<b>% Programs Offering Benefit</b>
<b>Written Personnel Policies Available to Employee</b>	324	293	90.4%
<b>Annual Performance Evaluation</b>	320	263	82.2%
<b>Secure Place for Teachers' Belongings</b>	314	256	81.5%
<b>Separate Staff Area for Breaks, Lunch, Staff Resources</b>	320	251	78.4%
<b>Wage Increase for Educational Advance</b>	308	226	73.4%
<b>Cost-of-Living Wage Increases</b>	306	205	67.0%
<b>Performance-Based Wage Increases</b>	305	194	63.6%
<b>Payment/Reimbursement for Educational or Training Expenses</b>	315	198	62.9%
<b>Wage Increase for Credential Attainment</b>	311	194	62.4%
<b>Paid Holidays</b>	321	197	61.4%
<b>Paid Sick Days</b>	320	191	59.7%
<b>Reduced Child Care Fees</b>	312	181	58.0%
<b>Paid Time Off for Trainings</b>	315	170	54.0%
<b>Formal Mentoring/Coaching</b>	299	150	50.2%
<b>Paid Personal/Vacation Days</b>	307	117	38.1%
<b>Retirement or Pension Plan</b>	302	105	34.8%
<b>Free Child Care</b>	308	71	23.1%
<b>Life Insurance</b>	294	54	18.4%
<b>Disability Insurance</b>	297	50	16.8%
<b>Dental Insurance</b>	297	40	13.5%
<b>Health Insurance</b>	297	38	12.8%

Many directors commented on the difficulty of providing benefits to their employees. Two examples are listed below:

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*“We need the states help in offering a health insurance to all employees’ full time working in this field. Daycares are unable to provide health insurance at a cost the employee can afford or even at a cost the employer can afford. If we could get a group insurance across the board it might help bring the cost down and help us offer insurance to employees. 90% of the time when I lose an employee it is because they are taking a job that offers health insurance. It is very frustrating to get a great employee that loves children and their job, just to watch them leave because they need health insurance. If they are not married and spouse doesn't have access to insurance employees will leave to get it. This needs to be the next goal across the board to help daycare centers maintain good employees.”*

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“Health insurance is too expensive for for-profit centers to offer as a small business. It would be great if we there was funding accessible to supplement the cost of fringe benefits as a way to attract more qualified teachers to early childhood.”

# Profile of Family Child Care Home Providers: Key Findings

Family child care homes play a vital role in the early childhood education system, offering small, home-based environments where children receive personalized care and learning opportunities. These programs are operated by licensed or license-exempt providers who care for a mixed-age group of children in their own homes, offering flexible schedules and strong family-centered relationships that support both child development and parental employment. For the purpose of this survey, licensed family child care will be the focus.

To better understand the characteristics, compensation, and staffing trends of this essential workforce, a total of 4,822 DCFS licensed family child care and group providers were invited to complete the FY 2025 Salary and Staffing Survey. A total of 799 surveys (for a response rate of 16.6 percent) were completed: 755 surveys were completed online; 28 were completed in the form of a paper document. Table 38 presents the response rates by CCR&R service delivery area (SDA) (see Appendix B).

There may be a discrepancy in the number of responses for each question because not all respondents answered every question. An “n” will be used to signify the number of responses to an item.

## Completed Surveys

**Table 38. Survey Return Rates by Service Delivery Area: Licensed Family Child Care Homes**

Service Delivery Area	CCR&R Main Office Location	Providers	Surveys Completed	Percentage of Surveys Completed
SDA 1	Rockford	238	38	16.0%
SDA 2	DeKalb	167	29	17.4%
SDA 4	Addison	599	88	14.7%
SDA 5	Joliet	245	37	15.1%
SDA 6	Chicago	2,083	366	17.6%
SDA 7	Moline	188	30	16.0%
SDA 8	Peoria	117	30	25.6%
SDA 9	Bloomington	101	16	15.8%
SDA 10	Urbana	319	45	14.1%
SDA 11	Charleston	50	10	20.0%

<b>Service Delivery Area</b>	<b>CCR&amp;R Main Office Location</b>	<b>Providers</b>	<b>Surveys Completed</b>	<b>Percentage of Surveys Completed</b>
<b>SDA 12</b>	<b>Quincy</b>	132	14	10.6%
<b>SDA 13</b>	<b>Springfield</b>	172	28	16.3%
<b>SDA 14</b>	<b>Granite City</b>	215	45	20.9%
<b>SDA 15</b>	<b>Mt. Vernon</b>	119	16	13.4%
<b>SDA 16</b>	<b>Carterville</b>	76	7	9.2%
<b>Totals</b>		4,821	799	16.6%

## Demographics

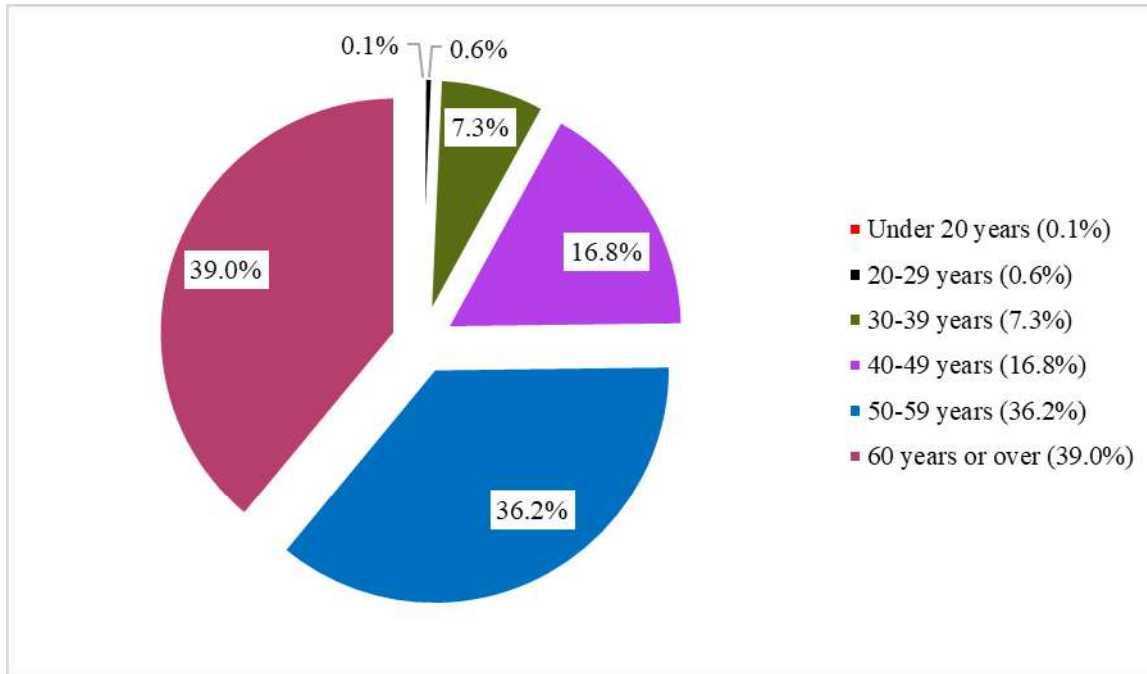
### Gender

Nearly all of the family child care practitioners who completed this item on the survey identified as female, representing 98.6 percent of respondents (691 of 701).

### Age

Family child care practitioners were asked to identify their age. As seen in Figure 23 and Table 39, the preponderance of respondents (99.9%) were 30 years or older, with 92.0% being 40 or older. The most frequently reported age range was 60 years or over (39.0%). The least frequently reported age range was under 20 years of age and was followed by the age range of 20-29 years. The category “50-59 years” accounted for 36.2 percent of all respondents.

**Figure 23. Respondents' Age (n = 702)**



**Table 39. Respondents' Age (n = 702)**

Age Range*	n	Percentage
Under 20 years	1	0.1%
20-29 years	4	0.6%
30-39 years	51	7.3%
40-49 years	118	16.8%
50-59 years	254	36.2%
60 years or over	274	39.0%

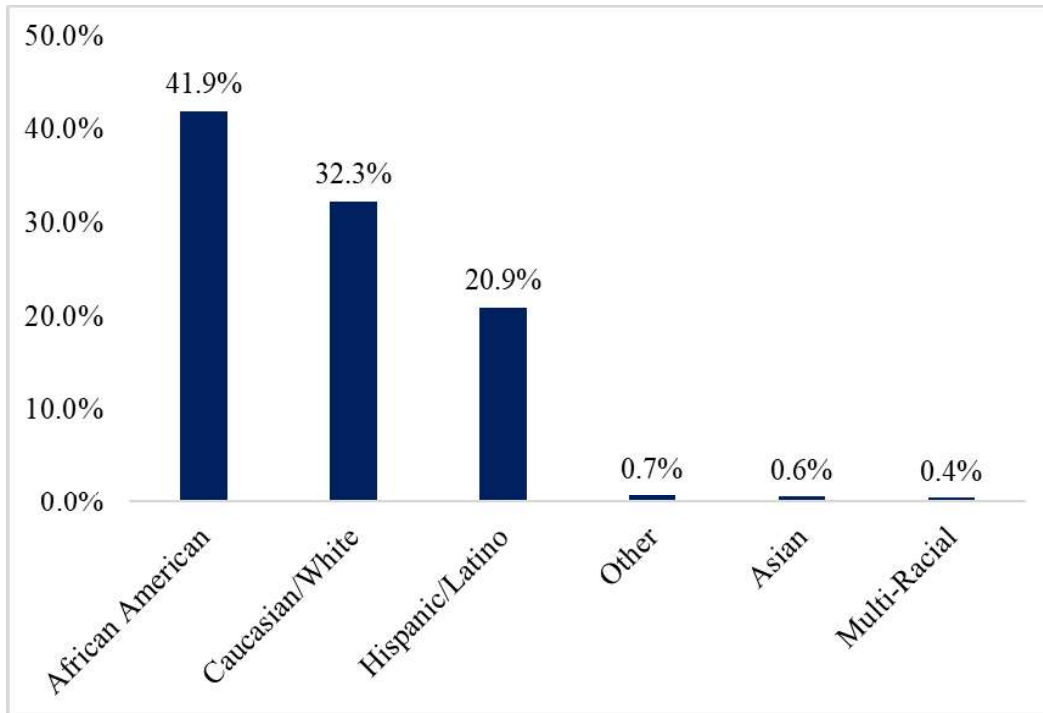
\*The question asked was "How old are you?"

### Race/Ethnicity

Practitioners were asked to self-identify their race/ethnicity. As Figure 24 and Table 40 display, 41.9 percent of family child care providers self-identified as "African American/Black", 32.3 percent as "Caucasian/White", and 20.9 percent self-identified as "Hispanic/Latino." No respondents were Native American or Pacific Islander, and 3.3 preferred to not answer. When compared to population data in Illinois, African Americans/Blacks are over-represented among licensed family child care home practitioners.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup>According to 2022 data from the Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/IL.US#>, 14.7 percent of the state population self-identified race/ethnicity as African American and 18.3 percent of the state population self-identified race/ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

**Figure 24. Respondents' Race/Ethnicity (n = 700)**



**Table 40. Respondents' Race/Ethnicity (n = 700)**

Race/Ethnicity	n	Percentage
African American	293	41.9%
Caucasian/White	226	32.3%
Hispanic/Latino	146	20.9%
Asian	4	0.6%
Other	5	0.7%
Multi-Racial	3	0.4%

### Language

Respondents were requested to identify their primary language. The majority of respondents (79.7 percent; n = 560 of n = 703) indicated that their primary language was English. The primary language reported for the remaining 20.3 percent of providers was Spanish. Of all 703 reporting providers, 18.8 percent (n = 132) indicated their primary language was Spanish, and 2.0 percent (n = 14) indicated their primary language was Ukrainian. The additional languages providers listed included Polish, Hindi/Urdu, Farsi, French, Korean, Yoruba, Bulgarian, and Esperanto.

## **Experience**

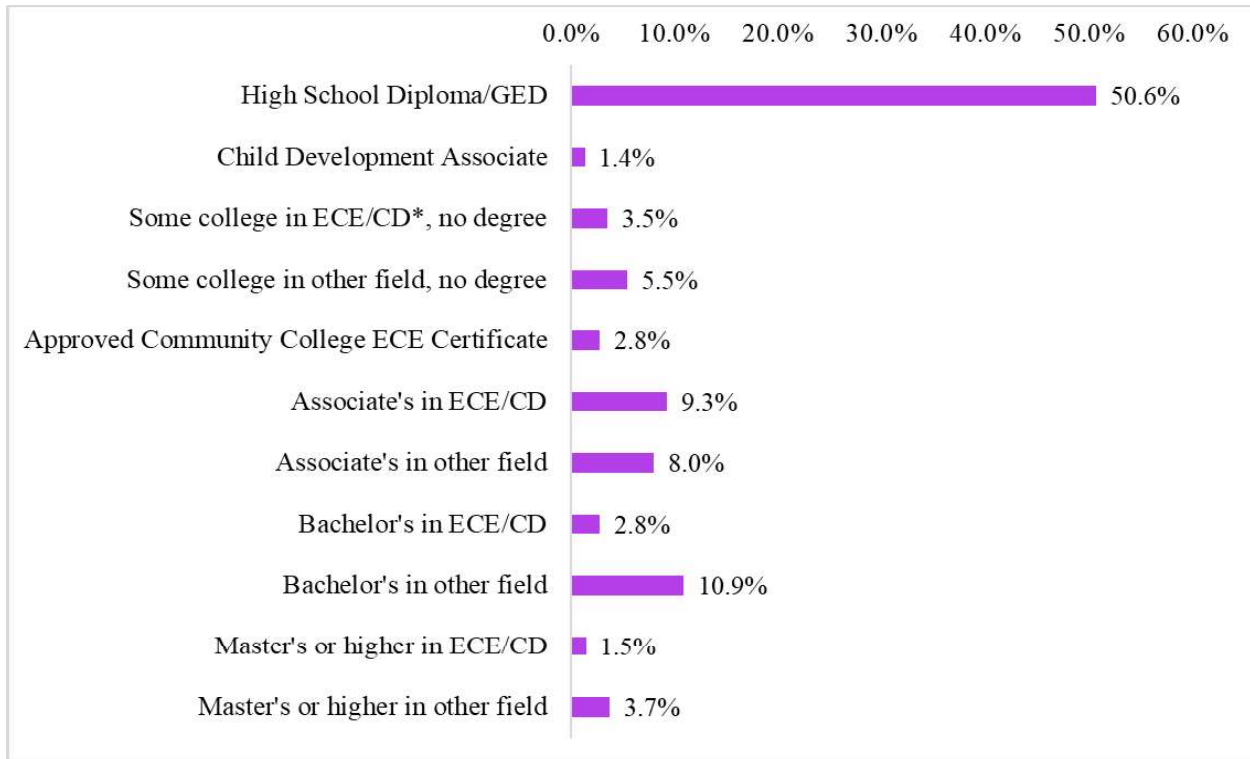
As a way of capturing longevity in family child care, practitioners were asked the length of time they had been paid to provide child care in their homes. The average length of time reported by providers was 19.9 years (n = 693; median = 20.0 years; range = 1 to 52 years).

There is often movement within the field of child care; therefore, practitioners were asked whether they were previously employed in other child care and education settings (i.e., child care center or public school). Out of the 695 responding practitioners, 29.9 percent (n = 208) had worked in another child care and education setting for an average of 8.4 years (median = 5.0 years; range = 1 to 34 years).

## **Education**

For the analysis on the highest level of education held by family child care providers, administrative data were pulled from the Gateways to Opportunity Registry at the time when the survey was administered. Licensing standards and qualifications for family child care providers can be found in Appendix D, and licensing standards and qualifications for group family child care providers can be found in Appendix E. Figure 25 and Table 41 display the frequency of educational attainment by the licensed family child care providers active in the Gateways Registry as of March 1, 2025. (When referring to Figure 25, please note: ECE = Early Childhood Education and CD = Child Development.)

**Figure 25. Education Level of Licensed Family Child Care Providers (n = 5,746)**



**Table 41. Education Level of Licensed Family Child Care Providers (n = 5,746)**

Educational Level	n	Percentage
<b>High School Diploma/GED</b>	2,909	50.6%
<b>Child Development Associate</b>	78	1.4%
<b>Some college in ECE/CD*, no degree</b>	202	3.5%
<b>Some college in other field, no degree</b>	314	5.5%
<b>Approved Community College ECE Certificate</b>	163	2.8%
<b>Associate's in ECE/CD</b>	533	9.3%
<b>Associate's in other field</b>	461	8.0%
<b>Bachelor's in ECE/CD</b>	163	2.8%
<b>Bachelor's in other field</b>	625	10.9%
<b>Master's or higher in ECE/CD</b>	84	1.5%
<b>Master's or higher in other field</b>	214	3.7%

\*ECE is the acronym for Early Childhood Education; CD is the acronym for Child Development.

After January 1, 2011, all new DCFS licensed family child care providers were required to have proof of a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate. This mandate is waived for family child care providers already licensed prior to the first day of 2011. Slightly less than half of respondents reported an education level beyond a high school diploma or GED; 17.3 percent reported they had an associate's degree, 13.7 percent indicated they had a bachelor's degree, and 5.2 percent indicated that they had a master's degree or higher. Out of the 11,125 family child care providers in the dataset, 0.4 percent reported to the Gateways Registry that they had earned their Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood endorsement.<sup>34</sup>

## **Accreditation and ExceleRate Illinois Status**

Utilizing information from DTP, variables were created to indicate the accreditation and ExceleRate Illinois status of family child care home providers who participated in the Salary and Staffing Survey. In FY 2025, 4.8 percent (n = 38) of family child care providers responding to the Salary and Staffing Survey were accredited through the National Association for Family Child Care Providers (NAFCC),<sup>35</sup> the primary national accrediting body for family child care homes.

All licensed providers are automatically placed at the Licensed Circle of Quality of ExceleRate Illinois when they become licensed. As shown in Figure 26 below, the Circles of Quality represented by survey respondents were:

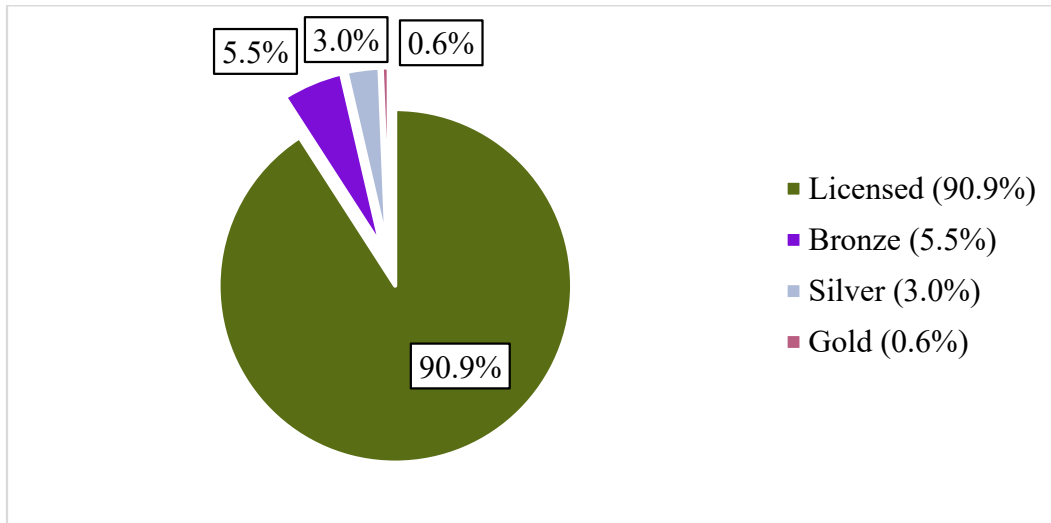
- 90.9 percent (n = 726) were at the Licensed Circle of Quality
- 5.5 percent (n= 44) were at the Bronze Circle of Quality
- 3.0 percent (n = 24) were at the Silver Circle of Quality
- 0.6 percent (n = 5) were at the Gold Circle of Quality

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<sup>34</sup> Known previously as a Type 04 (early childhood) teaching certificate, the PEL with an early childhood endorsement is granted by the Illinois State Board of Education to educators who have earned a BA degree in early childhood and passed all state exams and requirements to teach in a publicly funded program serving children birth through age eight.

<sup>35</sup> Per the online search tool at <https://nafcc.org/accreditation/nationally-accredited-fcc-educators-map/>, there are 1,122 NAFCC Accredited providers and 97 (8.6 percent) are from Illinois.

**Figure 26. ExceleRate Illinois Status**



According to the survey sample (n = 799), participation in ExceleRate Illinois at a level higher than the Licensed Circle of Quality was significantly associated with achievement of NAFCC Accreditation ( $p < .001$ , Fisher’s exact test) such that ExceleRate Illinois 50.0 percent of NAFCC accredited providers were participating in ExceleRate Illinois at a level higher than the Licensed Circle of Quality. There were 7.1 percent of non-accredited providers participating in ExceleRate Illinois at a level higher than the Licensed Circle of Quality.

## Demographics of Children Served

Targeting supports, equitable child care, and culturally responsive practices in ECE require an examination of the demographics of the children and families served. Providers reported an estimated number of children from each ethnic group and the number of second language learners in their care. First, for each provider, we calculated the percentage of children in each race category based on the number the provider reported as being enrolled. We then analyzed the mean, median, and range of those percentages across all providers that responded to the question. Table 42 presents the mean proportions of children from each ethnic group reported by respondents.

**Table 42. Descriptives of Children Served by Race/Ethnicity (n = 7,995)**

Child Race/Ethnicity	n	Mean	Median	Range*
African American/Black	7,995	57.8%	75%	0-100%
Asian	7,995	3.4%	0.0%	0-100%
Caucasian/White	7,995	51.6%	55.6%	0-100%
Hispanic/Latino	7,995	38.5%	20.0%	0-100%

<b>Child Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Range*</b>
<b>Native American</b>	7,995	0.8%	0.0%	0-100%
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	7,995	0.3%	0.0%	0-25%
<b>Multi-Racial</b>	7,995	12.9%	7.7%	0-100%
<b>Other</b>	7,995	3.3%	0.0%	0-100%

\*The table should be read “On average, homes served 57.8% African American/Black children, with a median of 75%, and anywhere from 0 to 100 percent.”

Practitioners were then asked to specify whether they had English language learners (ELL) enrolled in their programs. Of 794 respondents to this question, 23.3 percent (n = 185) indicated they had English language learners enrolled in their programs. Among those with ELLs, 78.4 percent (n= 145) reported having children whose primary language was Spanish as ELLs in their programs. Many other languages were represented in the sample, each with less than ten providers serving children who are ELLs of a particular language such as: Arabic, Chinese dialects, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi/Urdu, Korean, Polish, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Yoruba, and Haitian Creole.

## Professional Development

### Program Awareness and Participation

In efforts to support the skill development and quality of the child care workforce, provider awareness of available training and educational opportunities was measured. Providers were asked about their awareness of some of the professional development opportunities and programs available in Illinois.

- Nearly all (99.4 percent; n = 713 of 717) knew of the *Gateways to Opportunity Registry*.
- Over 90 percent (94.1 percent; n = 656 of 697) knew of the online training opportunities available through the *Gateways i-learning System*.
- Over 90 percent (91.7 percent; n = 644 of 702) knew of *Gateways to Opportunity Credentials*.
- Over 90 percent (91.0 percent; n = 638 of 701) knew of the Great START Program.
  - 16.4 percent of family child care homes (n = 131 of 799) had at least one Great START recipient in the past two years. Those 131 programs had a total of 138 recipients.
- Exactly 90 percent (n = 627 of 697) had heard of the *Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program*.
  - 3.9 percent (n = 31 of 799) of family child care programs had at least one *Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship* participant for a total of 32 participants.
- Over 80 percent (87.8 percent; n = 610 of 695) knew of *ExceleRate Illinois*.

- Over two-thirds of participants (68.8 percent; n = 467 of 679) had heard of the consultant/specialist (e.g., Mental Health Consultant, Quality Specialist, Infant/Toddler Specialist) services offered by the CCR&Rs.
- Over half (58.8 percent; n = 391 of 665) knew of the *Professional Development Advisor Program*.

## Training and Training Opportunities

Licensing standards require family child care practitioners to have a minimum of fifteen training hours per year. Generally, respondents exceeded this minimum. Family child care providers reported devoting 24.5 hours to workshops or conference training in the past year (n = 727; median = 18.0 hours; range = 1-400 hours).

The content of training can vary in its relevance to early care and education (ECE). Family child care providers were asked to report the sources of training they accessed within the past year, with results summarized in Table 43. In this survey, online training was the principal source of training for family child care practitioners, with over three quarters (77.7 percent) reporting using online training as a source to meet their training needs. This is an increase from the 67.7 percent in FY 2023 that reported taking online training. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) workshops have been the second highest source of training in the past four reports; the percentage of providers using CCR&R Workshops was at a low in FY 2021 with 45.6%, and in FY 2023 with 51.1%. The 64.5% in this report is more consistent with FY 2019 (65.8%) and FY 2017 (62.3%). The decline in FY 2021 was likely due to the COVID shut down, while the decline in FY 2023 was likely due to CCR&Rs reopening and preparing to offer more in person workshops.

**Table 43. Sources of Training (n = 799)**

Training Sources	n	Percentage
<b>Online Training</b>	621	77.7%
<b>Child Care Resource and Referral Workshops</b>	515	64.5%
<b>Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) training</b>	477	59.7%
<b>Professional Meeting or Conference Workshops</b>	183	22.9%
<b>Local Community Workshops</b>	143	17.9%

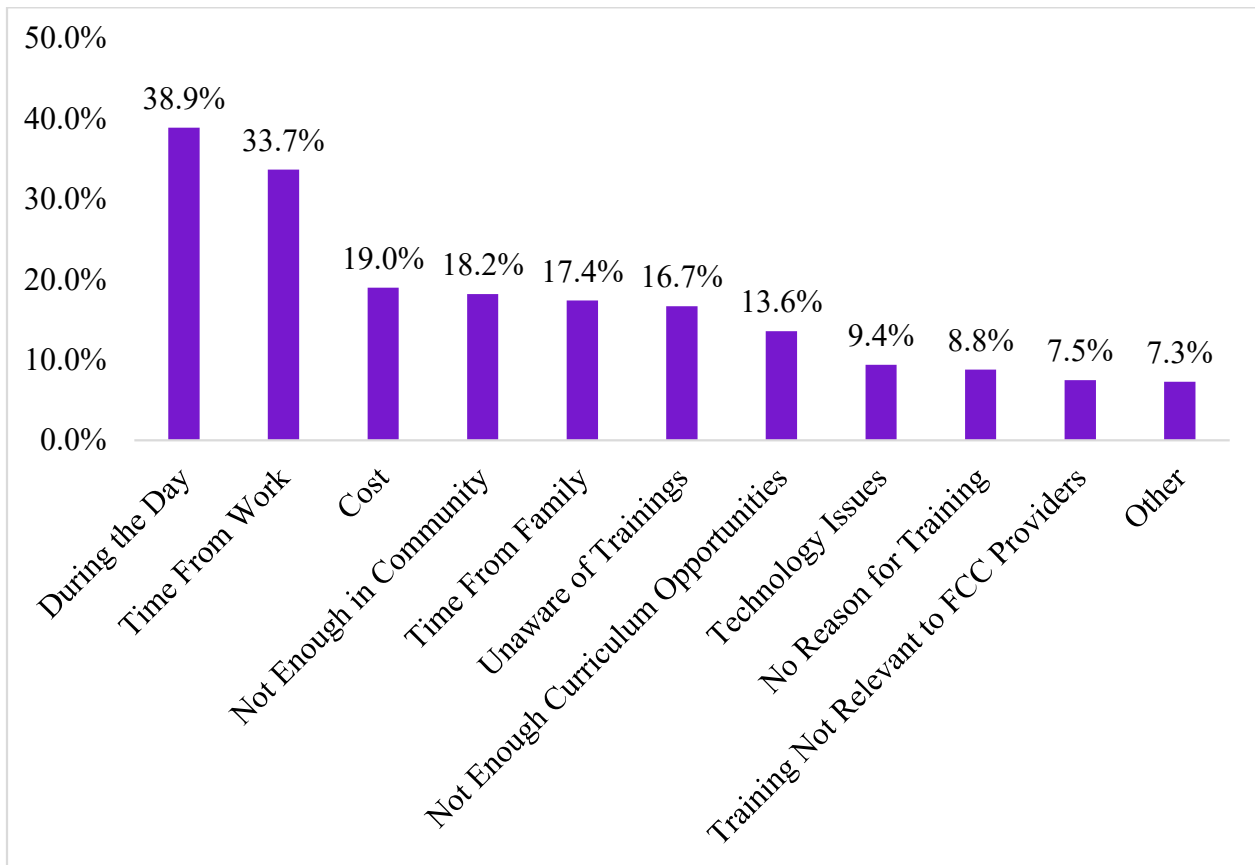
*Percentages add up to greater than 100 percent as respondents were asked to endorse all applicable items. Also, the sum of individual responses to each option will add to greater than the overall “n” respondents to the question.*

Family child care providers were asked to rate their satisfaction with training opportunities offered to meet specific needs in the field. On a scale of importance from 1 (“Very dissatisfied”) to 5 (“Very satisfied”). Providers were satisfied (mean = 4.0; n = 739) with training opportunities

specific to their needs; the results indicate that, on average, respondents were satisfied with the training they received. This suggests that most child care providers view the training as effective and valuable, though there may still be some room for improvement. However, not all providers are able to attend training opportunities. To determine what might hinder an individual's ability to attend trainings, providers were presented with a list of potential barriers to attending trainings and were asked to select all that applied. Responses are listed below and shown in Figure 27.

- 38.9 percent (n = 186) selected: “Most opportunities are during the day, so it is difficult for me to attend”;
- 33.7 percent (n = 161) selected: “I am unable to take time away from my work to take more training”;
- 19.0 percent (n = 91) selected the item: “Cost of training is too high”;
- 18.2 percent (n = 87) chose: “My community does not have enough courses/workshops”;
- 17.4 percent (n = 83) selected: “I am unable to take time away from my family to take more training”;
- 16.7 percent (n = 80) selected the item: “Unaware of training offered in my area”;
- 13.6 percent (n = 65) selected: “There are not enough curriculum opportunities”;
- 9.4 percent (n = 45) chose: “Technology issues”;
- 8.8 percent (n = 42) chose: “There is no reason to pursue more training”;
- 7.5 percent (n = 36) selected: “The trainings I can find are not relevant to family child care providers”; and
- 7.3 percent (n = 35) selected: “Other”.

**Figure 27. Barriers to Attending Trainings**



Of the 35 providers who selected “Other”, 44.1 percent indicated a desire for new training offerings with more variety, 11.8 percent reported that training locations were distant, and some noted that training scheduled outside of work hours prevented their participation.

Providers may also access coursework in early care and education at higher education institutions. Practitioners were requested to indicate whether they had completed any ECE or CD coursework within the past two years. Of the 750 practitioners who responded to this survey item, 86 (11.5 percent) reported completing coursework, with an average of 40.8 semester hours (median = 22.5) completed in the past two years. The average semester hours completed in this report have increased slightly from 39.3 hours reported in FY 2023.

## **Capacity and Enrollment**

One aim of the Salary and Staffing Survey is to characterize the care environment of family child care home practitioners. According to DTP, the average total licensed capacity of the sample was

approximately 10.4 (median = 11.0) children. The average licensed capacity of all 4,821 family child care providers on the database was 10.0 children.<sup>36</sup>

During a typical week, providers reported caring for an average of 8.7 (n = 756; median = 8.0) children (excluding their own). Nearly 85 percent (84.8 percent) of providers indicated that they accept children whose families receive IDHS or IDCFS financial assistance. On average, providers had 8.4 (n = 644; median = 7.0) children enrolled in their program whose child care is being funded through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or IDCFS vouchers.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, providers reported serving an average of 7.0 of all client families (n = 529; median = 5.0) who receive financial assistance (from government, employers, local agencies) to subsidize child care costs.

A greater proportion of respondents participating in ExceleRate Illinois at a level higher than the Licensed Circle of Quality also served CCAP families in their programs, however the participation in higher levels of ExceleRate Illinois was not statistically significantly associated with serving CCAP families ( $\chi^2 = 2.44, p = .17$ ). Crosstabulations indicated that 98.6 percent of providers participating at a level higher than the Licensed Circle of Quality serve CCAP families, whereas 94.3 percent of providers at the Licensed Circle of Quality serve CCAP families. The relationship between level of ExceleRate Illinois and CCAP acceptance was minimal.<sup>38</sup>

Family child care providers were also asked to rate the change in vacancies, enrollment pattern, and the number of children with families receiving IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care subsidy in the past two years on a scale from 1 (“Decreased greatly”) to 5 (“Increased greatly”). The change in the number of vacancies (mean = 2.8, n = 717), enrollment pattern (mean = 2.9, n = 711), and the number of children with families receiving IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care subsidy (mean = 3.1, n = 684) share a median of 3.0, indicating that providers believed all factors of enrollment stayed the same over the past two years.

## Assistants

DCFS licensing requirements for staff in group homes and child care homes differ. Staff employed in group homes must have a high school diploma or equivalent and be at least 18 years

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<sup>36</sup> Licensed capacity in DTP adds regular capacity and extended capacity together. Extended capacity signifies the number of before- and after-school children a provider may care for on top of their regular capacity. For any capacity typically over 8, an assistant is required to be present.

<sup>37</sup> About 9.9 percent of providers indicated that they have had children/families on CCAP enrolled over the last 2 years but did not have any children on CCAP currently. Those providers were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>38</sup> Data from DTP was used to obtain the ExceleRate Illinois status of all providers who participated in the Staffing and Salary Survey.

of age if an on-site supervisor is present. If not, staff must be 21.<sup>39</sup> Staff working in child care homes are required to be at least 14 years of age, work under the direct supervision of the family child care provider and be at least five years older than any child for which they provide care.<sup>40</sup> In the 2025 Salary and Staffing Survey, group family child care practitioners and family child care practitioners reported on the assistants they employed. Of the 752 providers that responded to the question, 52.4 percent (n = 394) indicated hiring paid assistants. Additionally, out of 692 respondents, 16.3 percent (n = 113) reported using unpaid assistants.

Paid family child care assistants received an average of \$17.16 per hour (n = 379; median = \$18.00). Their typical work week averaged 30.41 hours (n = 377; median = 30.0).

There is a large discrepancy in the range of hourly wages reported for assistants. Since a minor can work in a family day care, family child care providers can hire their own children. Although minimum wage for youths under the age of 18 is \$13 per hour,<sup>41</sup> providers can hire their eligible teenage children for less; however, with the exception of an employer's parent, spouse, or child, or other members of his or her immediate family, Minimum Wage Law requires an employer to pay an employee 18 years of age or older at least \$15.00 per hour (minimum wage).<sup>42, 43,44</sup>

Family child care practitioners were then asked to provide additional thoughts about staffing in the comments section of the survey. The primary theme was staff retention issues due to non-competitive wages. Below is a comment from a provider regarding staffing and compensation.

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*“Providing adequate staffing and compensation in the childcare setting is a significant challenge due to low wages. This sometimes leads to staff quitting and staff shortages which in turn limits access to care for families and impacts the quality of services provided.”*

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<sup>39</sup> From 89 III. Adm. Code 508.45. All requirements can be found at

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089004080000450R.html>

<sup>40</sup>From Part 406 DCFS Licensing Requirements for Day Care Homes, part 406.10. All requirements can be found at <https://dcfs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dcfs/documents/about-us/policy-rules-and-forms/documents/rules/rules-406.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> From "State of Illinois – Department of Labor Hourly Minimum Wage Rates by Year", *Illinois Department of Labor*, <<https://labor.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idol/laws-rules/fls/documents/minimumwagehistoricrates.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> From "Illinois Compiled Statutes (820 ILCS 105/) Minimum Wage Law", *Illinois General Assembly*, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2400&ChapterID=68>

<sup>43</sup> Based on this rationale, all reported wages under \$10.50 were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>44</sup> Minimum wage requirements are higher in the City of Chicago for employees of all ages than the statewide requirement.

## **Business Characteristics**

### **Hours**

Respondents (n = 679) indicated being compensated for an average of 50.8 hours per week (median = 50.0 hours) caring for children. Their child care home operates an average of 49.2 weeks per year (n = 693; median = 51.0 weeks). Providers were also asked whether they offer non-traditional hour care (caring for children at any point between 6:01 pm - 5:59 am on weekdays or any time on weekends). Of the 695 respondents who answered the question, 52.2 percent do not provide non-traditional hour care. Among those who responded and do provide non-traditional hour care:

- 24.0 percent provide non-traditional hour care at some point during the weekdays,
- 17.0 percent provide non-traditional hour care at some point during both weekdays and weekends, and
- 6.8 percent provide non-traditional hour care at some point during weekends.

In addition to hours spent directly with children, providers reported spending an average of 20.3 hours per week (n = 687; median = 15.0 hours) on various activities performed before or after business hours. These activities include preparing food, shopping, cleaning, record keeping, and preparing educational activities for the children.

Practitioners were also asked whether they closed for holidays, vacation, sick days, training, or any other occasion. Out of 672 providers who responded, 96.6 percent (n = 649) responded affirmatively; consistent with the previous survey. The average number of days closed per year was 15.4 days (median = 14.0 days).

### **Earnings and Operating Expenses**

In previous years, questions about expenses, gross earnings, and net earnings were open-ended questions that asked for an exact or estimated dollar amount. For this report, the questions were edited and provided response categories of a \$10,000 range for each question (e.g., \$10,000 - \$20,000; \$20,000 - \$30,000; etc.).<sup>45</sup> Practitioners were first queried about their annual expenses for food, utilities, insurance, and materials; all expenses except wages. Eight response options were provided and ranged from less than \$10,000 in annual caregiving expenses to \$70,000 or more, increasing in \$10,000 increments. Of the 683 providers who responded to this question, the average annual expenses fell within the range of \$20,000 to less than \$30,000, consistent with 2023. This suggests that, on average, caregivers are spending a substantial amount of their own resources each year on essential needs such as food, utilities, insurance, and caregiving materials.

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<sup>45</sup> Use caution in interpretation of these findings while comparing to previous years due to the change in answer format.

Licensed family child care providers were asked to report their gross and net annual earnings. Nine response options ranged from less than \$30,000 in *gross* annual earnings providing child care to \$100,000 or more, increasing in \$10,000 increments. Of the 687 providers who responded to this question, the average *gross annual* earnings fell within the range of 50,000 to less than 60,000 in gross annual earnings.

FY 2025 reported *gross* earnings were slightly higher than those reported in FY 2023, FY 2021, and FY 2019. Eight response options included ranges from negative to less than \$10,000 in *net* annual earnings, to \$70,000 or more, increasing in \$10,000 increments. This survey reported *net* annual earnings (n = 675) within the range of \$20,000 to less than \$30,000, which is an increase from FY 2023. In FY 2023, respondents reported average *net* annual earnings of \$13,985.85. In FY 25:

- 25 percent of family child care providers netted \$10,000 to less than \$20,000;
- 50 percent of family child care providers netted \$20,000 to less than \$30,000; and
- 75 percent of family child care providers netted \$30,000 to less than \$40,000.

In FY 2025, the average hourly wage family child care providers earned ranged from \$8.00 to \$12.00 (compared to the state minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour); however, this hourly wage only reflects the average length of time that direct service is provided to children. When the average hours spent cleaning, preparing food, shopping, recordkeeping, and preparing educational activities for children (20.3 hours) are factored into the equation, child care providers work on average 71.1 hours per week and average \$5.72 to \$8.58 per hour.<sup>46</sup>

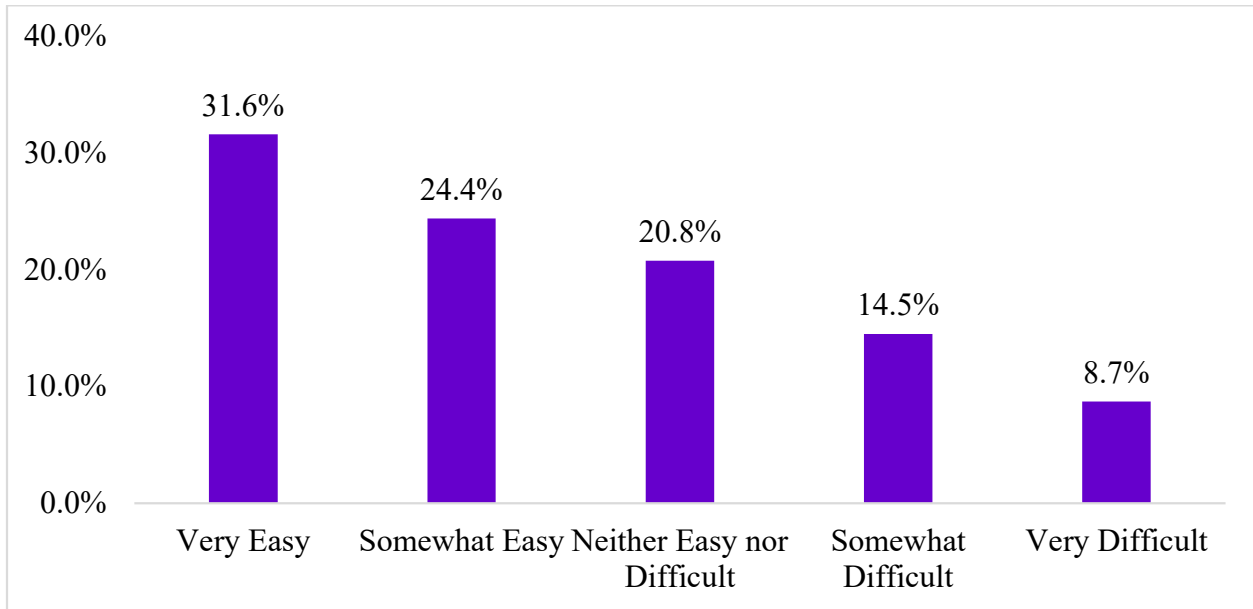
As independent business owners, family child care providers set their own rates. Rates can exceed the CCAP rates reimbursed by the state. Providers can choose to have parents pay the difference between the CCAP reimbursement rates and their private rates. In FY 2025, providers were asked to provide information about their experience with CCAP. These questions specifically addressed whether providers charged parents more than their CCAP copays, the difficulty they experience in collecting CCAP copays, and whether or not the difficulty in collecting CCAP copays had changed in the past two years. Out of 641 respondents, 14.8 percent of providers (n = 95) reported charging families more than their CCAP copay; 85.2 percent (n = 546) of providers reported charging families their CCAP copay only.

Out of 702 practitioners who rated the difficulty of collecting CCAP copays, on a scale of 1 (“Very Easy”) to 5 (“Very Difficult”), providers reported an average of 2.4 (median = 2.0). A rating of 2 means providers thought it was “somewhat easy” to collect copays. Figure 28 and Table 44 display difficulty collecting CCAP copays.

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<sup>46</sup> The average hourly wage of a family child care practitioner can be calculated using the formula:  
*Average net income* ÷ (*average of hours worked per week* X *average number of weeks worked per year*)

**Figure 28. Difficulty Collecting CCAP Copays (n = 702)**

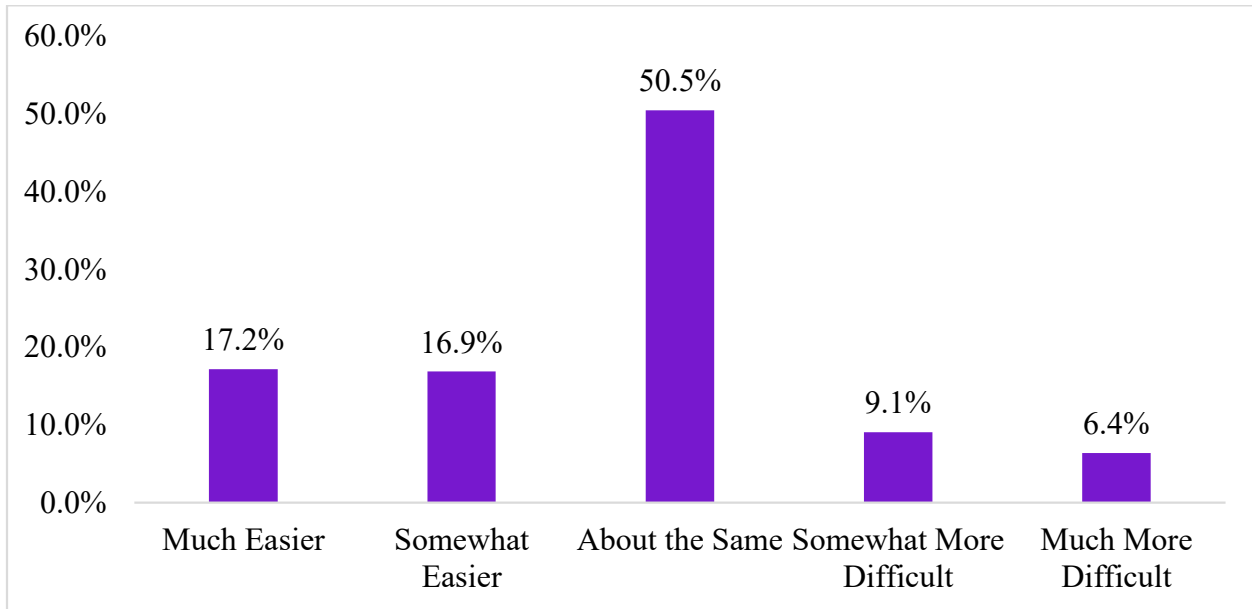


**Table 44. Difficulty Collecting CCAP Copays (n = 702)**

Difficulty Collecting CCAP Copays	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Very Easy)</b>	31.6%	222
<b>2 (Somewhat Easy)</b>	24.4%	171
<b>3 (Neither Easy nor Difficult)</b>	20.8%	146
<b>4 (Somewhat Difficult)</b>	14.5%	102
<b>5 (Very Difficult)</b>	8.7%	61

In response to whether the difficulty in collecting CCAP copays had changed, on a scale of 1 (“Much Easier”) to 5 (“Much More Difficult”), out of 705 respondents, providers reported an average of 2.7 (median = 3.0). A rating of 3 means providers felt the difficulty collecting CCAP copays had “stayed about the same” as before. Figure 29 and Table 45 show changes in difficulty collecting CCAP copays.

**Figure 29. Change in Difficulty Collecting CCAP Copays (n = 705)**



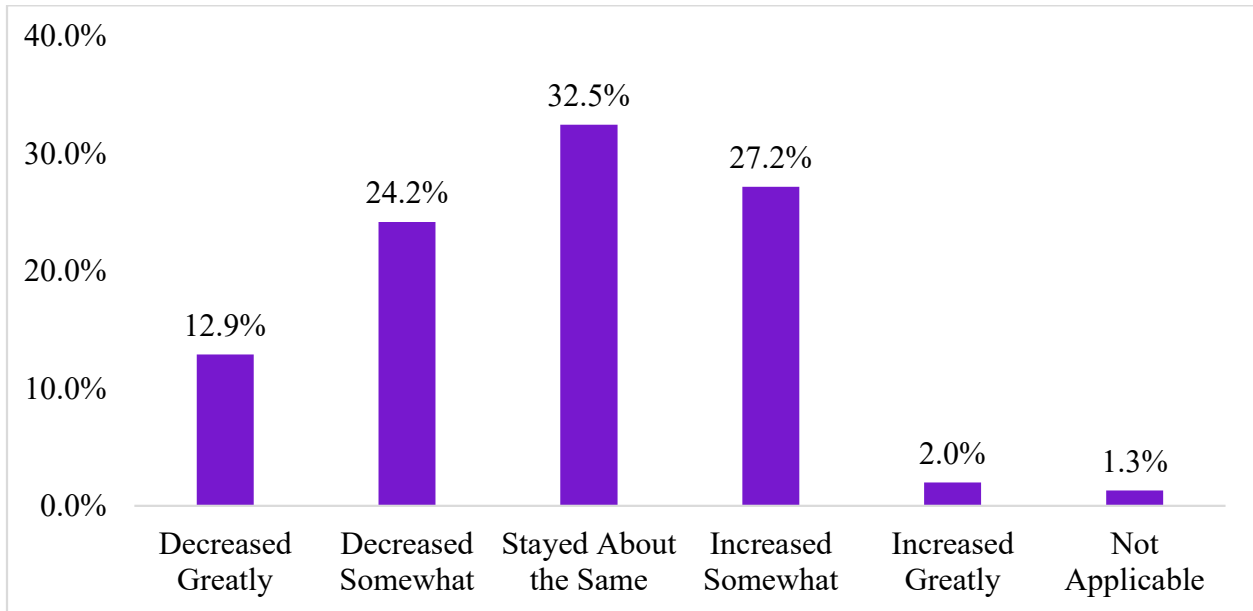
**Table 45. Change in Difficulty Collecting CCAP Copays (n = 705)**

Change in Difficulty Collecting Copays	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Much Easier)</b>	17.2%	121
<b>2 (Somewhat Easier)</b>	16.9%	119
<b>3 (About the Same)</b>	50.5%	356
<b>4 (Somewhat More Difficult)</b>	9.1%	64
<b>5 (Much More Difficult)</b>	6.4%	45

Continuing with the assessment of provider finances, providers were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (“Decreased Greatly”) to 5 (“Increased Greatly”) how their gross earnings, expenses, and net earnings had changed in the past two years. In response to changes in their gross annual earnings, out of 699 providers responding to the question, an average of 2.9 (median = 3.0) was reported, indicating that their gross annual earnings stayed about the same. Figure 30 and Table 46 show the responses.

Providers subsequently rated changes in their annual expenses, on a scale of 1 (“Decreased Greatly”) to 5 (“Increased Greatly”); 693 providers reported an average of 4.0 (median = 4.0). A score of 4 indicates that providers’ annual expenses “increased somewhat”, and Figure 31 and Table 47 show all responses.

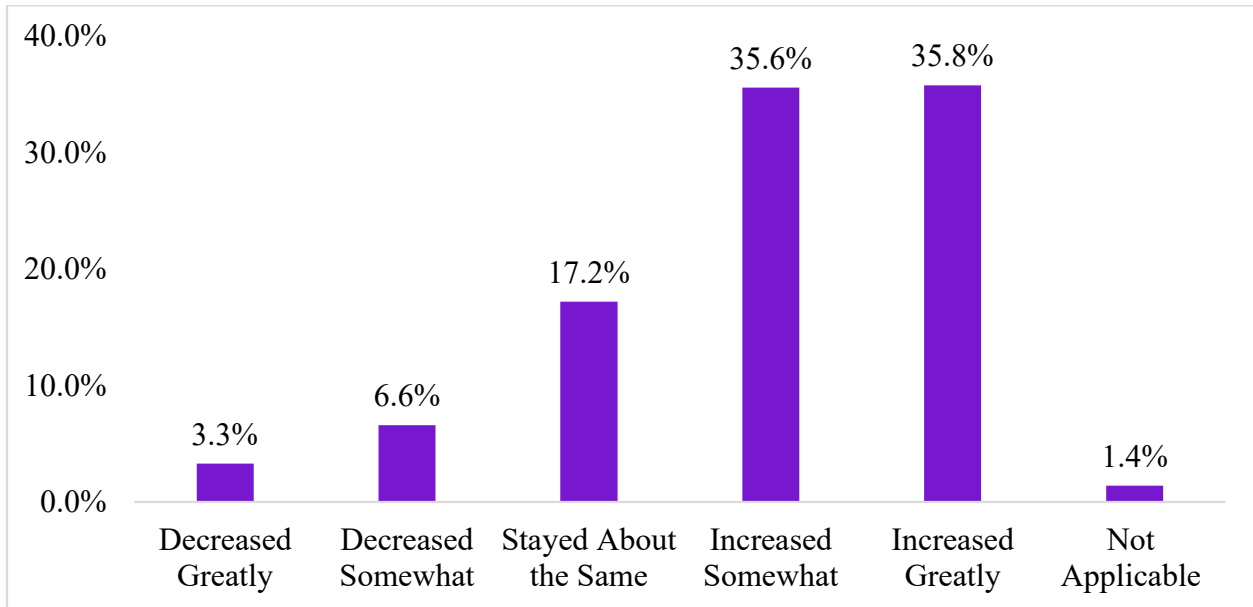
**Figure 30. Change in Gross Annual Earnings (n = 699)**



**Table 46. Change in Gross Annual Earnings (n = 699)**

Change in Gross Annual Earnings	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Decreased Greatly)</b>	12.9%	90
<b>2 (Decreased Somewhat)</b>	24.2%	169
<b>3 (Stayed About the Same)</b>	32.5%	227
<b>4 (Increased Somewhat)</b>	27.2%	190
<b>5 (Increased Greatly)</b>	2.0%	14
<b>6 (Not Applicable)</b>	1.3%	9

**Figure 31. Change in Annual Expenses (n = 693)**

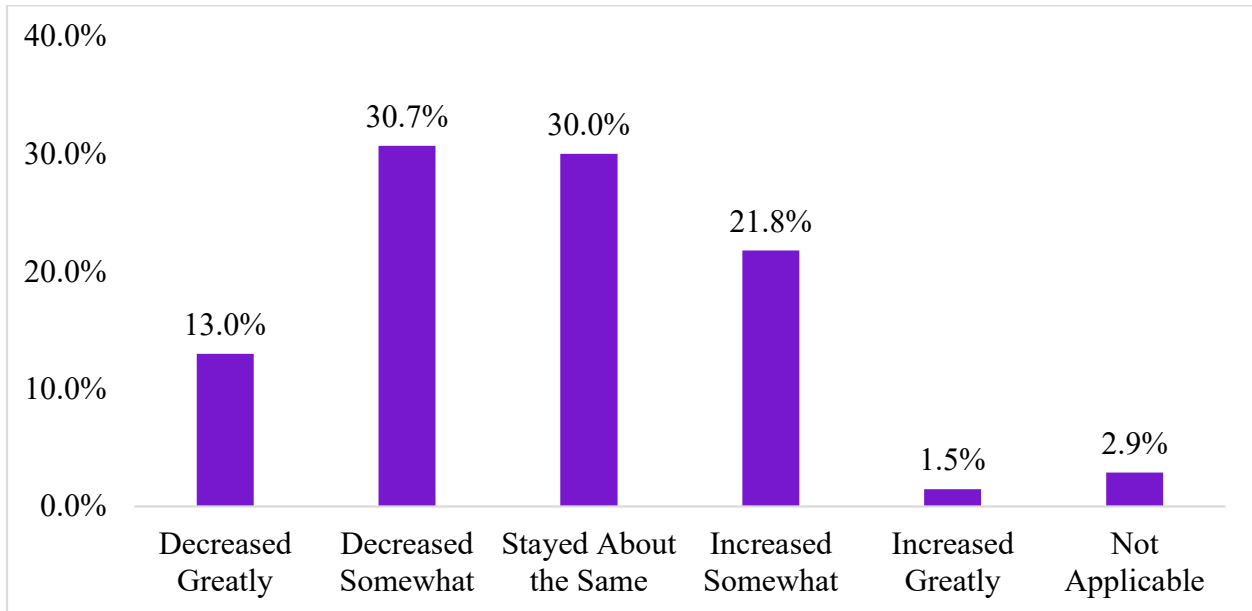


**Table 47. Change in Annual Expenses (n = 693)**

Change in Annual Expenses	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Decreased Greatly)</b>	3.3%	23
<b>2 (Decreased Somewhat)</b>	6.6%	46
<b>3 (Stayed About the Same)</b>	17.2%	119
<b>4 (Increased Somewhat)</b>	35.6%	247
<b>5 (Increased Greatly)</b>	35.8%	248
<b>6 (Not Applicable)</b>	1.4%	10

Finally, in response to changes in their net annual earnings over the past two years, out of 683 providers, an average of 2.8 (median = 3.0) was reported. A response of 3 means that providers thought their net annual earnings and expenses “stayed about the same”, whereas a score of 2 means net annual earnings and expenses “decreased somewhat”. Figure 32 and Table 48 show the trend for net annual earnings.

**Figure 32. Change in Net Annual Earnings (n = 683)**



**Table 48. Change in Net Annual Earnings (n = 683)**

Change in Net Annual Earnings	Percentage	n
<b>1 (Decreased Greatly)</b>	13.0%	89
<b>2 (Decreased Somewhat)</b>	30.7%	210
<b>3 (Stayed About the Same)</b>	30.0%	205
<b>4 (Increased Somewhat)</b>	21.8%	149
<b>5 (Increased Greatly)</b>	1.5%	10
<b>6 (Not Applicable)</b>	2.9%	20

The survey asked practitioners to record any additional thoughts they had about compensation in the field of child care. One provider shared:

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*"[...] If you break down our pay, some of us are not earning minimum wage. If I worked at a company for 22 years, like I have for daycare, I would get at least 3 weeks paid vacation, holiday, and sick pay. Providers are underpaid and overworked. I am in my 50's. I don't want to work almost 60 hours a week to make less than minimum wage an hour."*

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## Other Income Sources

Providers were asked to report on other sources of income beyond their family child care programs. The Child and Adult Food Care Program<sup>47</sup> was an income source identified by the majority of providers (78.1 percent). Under half of providers (44.3 percent) indicated there was at least one other adult who contributed to their household income. In addition, under one tenth of providers (6.5 percent) reported having a second paid job.

## Fee Policies

Family child care homes are considered small businesses; therefore, fee policies are decided by the owner(s). Fee policies are put into place by the provider and indicate whether they choose to charge tuition in events where either the child is absent, or the provider needs to close. As Table 49 shows, the majority of family child care providers choose to be paid when the program is closed for the holidays (73.7 percent). In addition, 68.8 percent of providers require parents to pay when the children are absent because they are sick, and 58.2 percent require parents to pay for days the child is on vacation. Over half (57.1 percent) require payment when the home is closed for vacation days, and 57.1 percent) require payment when the home is closed for vacation days. A large portion of providers do not require parents to pay for days when the family child care home is closed due to the provider's illness (39.6 percent) or training attendance (19.8 percent). When family child care homes are closed for other reasons (e.g., family emergencies, bereavement, jury duty, doctor appointments, personal days, or inclement weather), only 19.3 percent of family child care practitioners require parents to pay.

**Table 49. Fee Policies**

<b>Provider is paid when...</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Closed for holidays</b>	412	73.7%
<b>Children are absent because they are sick</b>	386	68.8%
<b>Children are on vacation</b>	326	58.2%
<b>Closed for vacation days</b>	318	57.1%
<b>Closed for sick days</b>	222	39.6%
<b>Closed for training days</b>	111	19.8%
<b>Other reasons</b>	104	19.3%

*Note: Percentages add up to greater than 100 percent as respondents were asked to endorse all items applicable to their programs.*

<sup>47</sup> The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a nutritional program funded through the USDA. In Illinois, this reimbursement program is administered by the Illinois State Board of Education. The program educates providers about proper nutrition and reimburses them for the meals and snacks they serve to children in care.

DCFS requires family child care homes to have a written policy that describes what will occur if a child is picked up late, including information about any late pick-up fees. Out of 709 practitioners who responded to this question, 56.7 percent charged a late pick-up fee (or early drop-off fee). The fee for late pick-up or early drop-off averaged \$2.69 (median = \$1.00) per minute for family child care providers who stated their fee (n = 382).<sup>48</sup>

## **Financial Assistance**

Family child care practitioners were provided with a list of financial assistance resources (definitions for financial assistance resources can be found at the end of Appendix A) and asked the question: “In the past two years, have you received any types of financial assistance?” Nearly two-thirds (64.7 percent) of the total respondents selected one or more of the following financial assistance resources. Specifically:

- 54.7 percent selected “Smart Start Workforce Grants;”
- 14.8 percent selected “Medicaid/Medicare for yourself;”
- 11.9 percent selected “COVID relief funding;”
- 6.6 percent selected “Medicaid for your children;”
- 4.3 percent selected “Food stamps/SNAP;” and
- 3.9 percent selected “All Kids for your child(ren).”

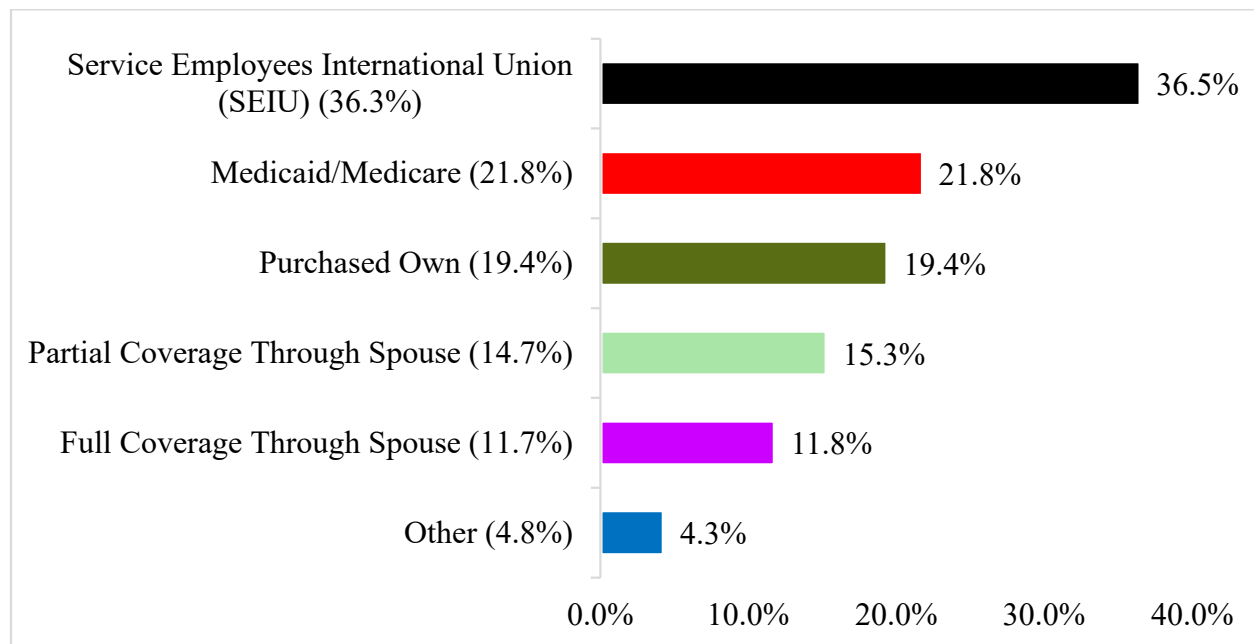
## **Benefits**

Practitioners were asked whether they were currently covered by any health insurance or medical plan. In response, 89.3 percent (n = 628) of the 703 child care practitioners that responded reported having health care coverage. This percentage aligns with the continuous increase we have seen since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act that began in 2014. Further analysis of health care coverage shows that 11.8 percent received full coverage, and 15.3 percent received partial coverage through their spouse’s employer, 19.4 percent purchased health insurance on their own, and 21.8 percent reported that they have Medicaid/Medicare. Of respondents, 36.5 percent had paid health care coverage received through the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a union for family child care providers. Under 5 percent (4.3 percent) received coverage through a variety of other sources, including as retirement benefits from previous employers and community health services. Figure 33 shows the benefits breakdown for practitioners.

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<sup>48</sup> Values over \$15 per minute were removed from analysis.

**Figure 33. Health Insurance Coverage for Family Child Care Home Providers**



Over half of practitioners (56.5 percent) indicated that they contribute to Social Security and Medicare. When asked the question, “In the last year, have you set aside any savings for your retirement,” one-third of the respondents (32.2 percent) said they had, which is an increase from the 30.3 percent in the 2021 report and 27.1 percent in 2023.

## Professional Support

Family child care practitioners often work alone and have no other adults within close proximity. Research suggests that the lack of “social, instrumental, and problem-solving support over a long workday as the only adult in the setting” and the lack of support when “having to play multiple roles” are potential sources of stress for providers. One way to combat that stress is to use support services such as participation in a professional organization or network with other professionals.<sup>49</sup> Providers were asked whether they had any contact with any other child care professionals. A majority of home-based practitioners (82.8 percent, n = 584) responding to the survey indicated that they have at least one other child care professional with whom they can discuss a problem in their program.

There are national, state, regional, and local child care associations that support the needs of family child care providers. Under half of respondents (46.7 percent; n = 332 of 711) reported

<sup>49</sup> Hamm, K., Gault, B., Jones-DeWeever, A., & Katie Hamm, B. G. and A. J.-D. (2005, April 14). *In our own backyards: Local and State Strategies to Improve the Quality of Family Child Care*. Institute for Women’s Policy Research. <https://iwpr.org/in-our-own-backyards-local-and-state-strategies-to-improve-the-quality-of-family-child-care/>

that they participate in a local professional child care network/organization. Just about three-quarters (70.9 percent; n = 496 of 700) indicated that they utilized their Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) as a professional support in the past two years. Local CCR&Rs provide various services to child care professionals.

## Turnover

Providers were asked to identify the length of time they anticipate continuing to operate their child care home. Nearly two-thirds (63.7 percent; n = 447) of providers responded, “I don’t know”, similar to the past five surveys. The remainder of providers (n = 255) indicated they would continue to provide child care in their homes for an average of 8.7 years (median = 7.5 years). This average is fairly consistent with the previous survey, which reported a mean of 8.9, but the median saw a 1.5-year decrease (9.0 years in FY 23 to 7.5 years in this report). To gauge potential turnover, providers were asked the question, “In the past two years, have you ever considered no longer providing care?” Of the 712 providers who responded to the question, 39.2 percent (n = 279) considered closing their business. Respondents who answered “yes” to that question were asked to further clarify by responding to a follow-up question that contained a list of reasons that traditionally contribute to provider burnout, age, and health. Practitioners were asked to rate the importance of each item on a scale of 1 (“Not important”) to 5 (“Very important”). Table 50 presents the reasons why a provider may discontinue care and various statistics for each reason.

**Table 50. Reasons Providers Considered No Longer Providing Care**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage Rating Item as “Very Important”</b>
<b>Dissatisfaction with retirement savings</b>	4.4	5.0	271	71.6%
<b>Dissatisfied with benefits</b>	4.2	5.0	273	62.6%
<b>Too little respect for child care providers</b>	4.0	5.0	273	54.2%
<b>Dissatisfied with income</b>	4.0	4.0	272	48.9%
<b>Too little time off</b>	3.6	4.0	268	43.3%
<b>Working hours are too long</b>	3.6	4.0	274	40.9%
<b>I am at retirement age</b>	3.0	3.0	269	30.5%
<b>Frustration with parents</b>	3.3	3.0	271	26.6%

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage Rating Item as “Very Important”</b>
<b>Enrollments are too low</b>	2.9	3.0	273	26.0%
<b>Other personal reasons</b>	2.7	3.0	233	22.7%
<b>Health problems</b>	2.9	3.0	268	22.4%
<b>Other reasons</b>	2.5	2.0	195	23.1%
<b>Mental health issues</b>	2.4	2.0	266	16.5%
<b>Isolation</b>	2.7	3.0	266	17.7%
<b>Returning to school</b>	2.0	1.0	268	12.3%
<b>Moving/relocating</b>	1.9	1.0	266	10.9%
<b>Enrollments are too high</b>	2.2	2.0	269	8.9%
<b>Not enough work hours</b>	1.8	1.0	268	7.5%

According to Table 50, “dissatisfaction with retirement savings”, “dissatisfaction with benefits”, and “too little respect for child care providers” were the three primary reasons providers considered no longer providing care. Dissatisfaction with income was the 4<sup>th</sup> top reason for turnover. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly salary of a child care worker was the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 29 occupations listed under the category Personal Care and Service Occupations which is an increase from the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 29 in FY 2023.<sup>50</sup> Some providers expressed their feelings about dissatisfaction with retirement, dissatisfaction with benefits, and too little respect for child care providers:

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*“I retired in October after 29 years. I ran a successful family child care home and planned for my retirement. [...] Planning for the future and investing in retirement is an important part of self-employment that many family child care providers do not plan for. Education on retirement plans would be beneficial for all.”*

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<sup>50</sup> “Occupation Employment and Wage Statistics: May 2023 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Illinois”, *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, [https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes\\_il.htm#39-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes_il.htm#39-0000).

*“Need some kind of insurance, to help with medical, dental, eye care, and prescription. Some people can't afford some of this care because of increase in these areas.”*

*“I think providers deserve to have more paid time off, better benefits, and more pay. I love working with children but us providers need to be compensated for our time and effort.”*

Practitioners were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (“Not important”) to 5 (“Very important”) a number of items that might influence them to continue providing child care in their homes. Participants rated better benefits and higher income as the main factors that would most entice them to continue providing child care. “More time off” was also rated as “very important” to over half of all respondents (mean = 4.0). (Again, family child care homes are only closed an average of 15.4 days per year.) Table 21 displays the results.

**Table 51. Reasons to Continue Offering Care**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage Rating Item as “Very Important”</b>
<b>Better benefits</b>	4.4	5.0	270	74.1%
<b>Higher income</b>	4.2	5.0	270	63.3%
<b>More time off</b>	4.0	5.0	265	54.7%
<b>Substitute caregivers</b>	3.4	4.0	269	40.9%
<b>Help with problem solving</b>	3.3	3.5	268	35.4%
<b>Family child care training</b>	3.0	3.0	266	27.1%
<b>Higher enrollments</b>	2.9	3.0	265	26.0%
<b>Being part of a professional organization</b>	2.8	3.0	267	22.8%
<b>More contact with other providers</b>	2.7	3.0	267	19.9%
<b>Other reasons</b>	2.3	1.0	143	17.5%
<b>Lower enrollments</b>	2.3	2.0	265	14.7%
<b>More work hours</b>	2.0	1.0	262	6.9%

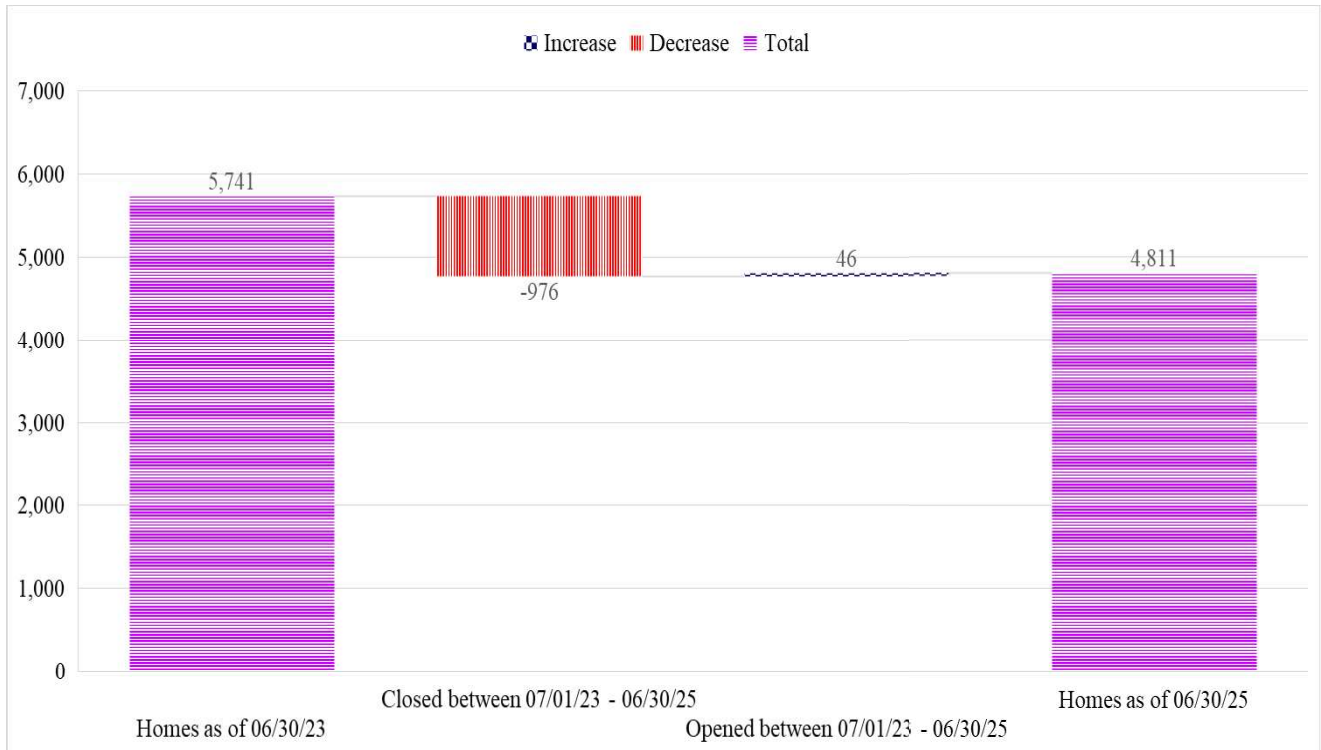
To assess turnover rate, the total number of family child care providers listed in the provider database on June 30, 2023 (the end of IDHS’s fiscal year) was compared to the number of providers listed in the same database on June 30, 2025. Through comparison of both databases,

data could be collected regarding the number of providers who were new on the database and the number of providers no longer providing child care. Table 52 presents the information, with visual representations in Figure 34 (provider turnover) and Figure 35 (capacity turnover). As the numbers show, family child care homes are closing at a faster rate than new ones are opening.

**Table 52. Provider Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Family Child Care Homes**

Population	Homes as of 06/30/2023	Lost due to homes closing between 07/01/2023 to 06/30/2025	Gained due to homes opening between 07/01/2023 to 06/30/2025	Homes as of 06/30/2025	Net Change 2023 to 2025
Active Providers	5,741	-976	46	4,811	-16.20%
Total Licensed Capacity	56,816	-9,196	447	48,316	-14.96%

**Figure 34. Provider Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Family Child Care Homes**



**Figure 35. Capacity Turnover 2023-2025: Licensed Family Child Care Homes**



## Motivations and Perceptions about Providing Child Care

To better understand what motivates family child care practitioners to provide child care in their home and capture their perceptions about their work, they were given a series of statements and asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”). Some of the statements focused on motivation and others on perception. As Table 53 reveals, practitioners reported several factors that motivated them to be in the child care business. The most enthusiastically endorsed (rated as “Strongly agree” by about 70 percent or more of the respondents) were: “Enjoy teaching children” and “Like to be in business for self.” The least common motivator was “Stay at home with own children,” which received a rating of “Neither disagree nor agree” by almost a quarter of the respondents.

**Table 53. Reasons for Providing Child Care**

Reason	Mean	Median	n	Percentage Rating Item as “Strongly agree”
Enjoy teaching children	4.6	5	696	73.4%
Like to be in business for self	4.6	5	696	70.1%

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage Rating Item as “Strongly agree”</b>
<b>Earn an income</b>	4.2	4	692	48.0%
<b>Stay at home with own children</b>	3.0	3	680	19.6%

Table 54 reflects the responses to questions that pertain to a practitioner’s perceptions about their work. The mean and median, number of respondents, and the percentage of respondents who rated the statement as a 5 (“Strongly agree”) are presented in the table below. Perceptions most highly embraced by providers revolved around their sense of professionalism in the job. Most respondents considered themselves to be small business owners, early childhood professionals, and acknowledge the role that training plays in furthering and maintaining their status as a professional.

**Table 54. Perceptions About Providing Child Care**

<b>Perception</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage Rating Item as “Strongly agree”</b>
<b>I consider myself a small business owner</b>	4.5	5.0	695	65.3%
<b>I consider myself an early childhood professional</b>	4.3	5.0	694	55.8%
<b>Getting more training helps me become more professional</b>	4.3	5.0	694	52.6%
<b>I can set my own rates and policies</b>	3.8	4.0	695	35.0%

Providers were asked to specify whether opportunities for family child care providers over the past two years improved, remained the same, or worsened. Among 689 respondents, slightly under half (48.2 percent) replied that opportunities over the past two years remained the same, 36.7 percent indicated they improved, and 15.1 percent responded that opportunities worsened. Compared to FY 2023, the percentage of respondents who indicated worsened opportunities decreased by 2.5 percent.

Providers who felt that opportunities for family child care programs had improved focused solely on pay increases from grants, training, and resources.

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*“Increase in pay and lots of training opportunities.”*

*“The Smart Start Workforce Grant has ensured that we can pay higher wages to ourselves and staff. Also, the ECACE scholarship allowed for me to attend college for my Master's Degree in ECE.”*

*“More trainings and resources are being provided. CCAP rates have increased.”*

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Providers who felt that opportunities for family child care programs have worsened observed low enrollment and low wages.

*“Childcare providers aren't paid enough, and it's hard to get families because they don't want to pay the prices.”*

*“Less children are enrolling.”*

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Providers shared additional comments that highlighted the challenges (n = 145) they face within their child care programs. Several emphasized the need for higher pay (n = 30; 20.7 percent) and more accessible support from agency and government staff (n = 12; 8.3 percent). Others expressed concerns about retirement plans (n = 16; 11.0 percent), employment benefits (n = 11; 7.6 percent), and the lack of paid time off (n = 9; 6.2 percent), resources that are not consistently available to all providers. A few providers noted the excessive documentation requirements imposed by DCFS (n = 7; 4.8 percent) and suggested being allowed to care for a larger number of children (n = 4; 2.8 percent). Recruiting and retaining qualified assistants was another significant challenge, as some providers reported difficulty finding and keeping skilled staff (n = 7; 4.8 percent). Moreover, a few providers voiced frustration over the limited respect they receive from their communities for their work in child care (n = 6; 4.1 percent). Some providers also stressed the importance of having access to more specialized training and professional development opportunities to strengthen their practice and enhance the quality of care they provide (n = 12; 8.3 percent).

*“It is hard to keep staff because of not being able to afford to pay for full time and also competitive pay rates with other childcare providers.”*

*“Times are changing rapidly, and it would be very beneficial for us to adapt and grow with these changes. Attending classes or training that help us address the challenges children face today would be especially valuable. For example, we could learn more about supporting children who experience bullying, navigating issues related to*

*family dynamics, building positive self-image, understanding developmental delays, and fostering respect and inclusion among children from diverse backgrounds.”*

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Despite the frustrations that family child care providers may face, there were many comments describing their appreciation for support received from child care networks in addition to having a passion for ECE and the children they care.

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*“I appreciate the opportunities that INCCRRA enables me to have both financial and educational. It enables me to broaden my knowledge and set money away for my retirement after I have reached requirements of INCCRRA.”*

*“As caregivers, we understand the responsibility and hard work that comes with caring for children. We want parents to know that showing up and doing this every day takes kindness, love, and compassion.”*

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# Conclusion

The Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey plays a key role in understanding Illinois' early child care workforce by providing comprehensive, biennial data on wages, salaries, benefits, and workplace conditions in licensed child care centers and family child care homes. These data inform policymakers, advocates, and program leaders about the realities faced by child care professionals and guide strategies to improve workforce recruitment, retention, and compensation. To complement this survey, the Gateways to Opportunity Registry offers more frequently updated data on workforce characteristics, including educational attainment, professional development, and compensation. Together, these resources provide an evidence base for informed decision-making and policy design aimed at strengthening the early childhood workforce. By leveraging these data sources, Illinois can better identify trends, address workforce challenges, and advance policies that ensure all children—regardless of geography or family income—have access to high-quality, stable, and nurturing early care and education.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions across the economy, with the child care sector particularly affected by closures, reduced enrollments, and increased costs for health and safety measures. Today, however, the sector is working toward moving beyond these challenges, adapting, and rebuilding the child care workforce. The Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey provides a valuable perspective on this recovery, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges. The data highlights a few areas of subtle progress, including an increase in staff retention and benefits, including retirement and different types of insurance, which demonstrate adaptation and growth. However, the data also reveals areas where additional support is needed to strengthen stability and quality across the system such as the decrease in hiring of male staff, stagnant enrollment, and decrease in the language diversity of employees. These findings underscore that there is still work to be done. Continued investment, workforce development, and policy support are essential to ensure that Illinois' child care system not only recovers from the pandemic but emerges stronger, more equitable, and better able to meet the needs of children and families in the years ahead.

The education level of Illinois' child care workforce highlights a strong foundation for quality early learning. The majority of practitioners in centers and family child care homes have completed some college, and 60.4 percent of early childhood teachers and 36.2 percent of family child care providers hold an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree. In addition, 22.4 percent of early childhood teachers and 13.6 percent of family child care providers have degrees specifically in early childhood education (ECE) or child development (CD). Findings show the importance of ongoing investment in professional development, targeted educational pathways, and support for ECE-specific training. Strengthening the qualifications of the workforce not only enhances the quality of care children receive but also contributes to the stability, retention, and effectiveness of early childhood professionals across Illinois.

Although noted nationally as a significant challenge, in Illinois, over the past two years, the turnover rate was 31.5 percent for early childhood teachers and 49.6 percent for early childhood teacher assistants—both representing declines from the previous survey. The primary reason reported for early childhood teacher departures was dissatisfaction with wages, consistent with

trends observed in past surveys (with the exception of FY11). Other common reasons included personal or family obligations, dissatisfaction with job duties, and burnout. The data indicate that turnover is often multifaceted. Directors frequently noted that staff departures involved personal reasons, highlighting the complexity behind workforce stability. These results capture the critical need for targeted policies and interventions—such as competitive compensation, improved working conditions, professional and mental health support—to strengthen retention, reduce turnover, and build a more stable, effective early childhood workforce in Illinois.

Over the past two years, 39.4 percent of family child care practitioners reported considering closing their child care homes, with slightly over one in six ultimately doing so. The primary reasons for potential or actual closure included dissatisfaction with retirement savings, dissatisfaction with benefits, and a perceived lack of respect for the work of child care providers. However, 36.7 percent of family child care providers thought that opportunities were getting better, and comments from providers some providers positively cited state programs. Addressing these challenges is critical to maintaining a stable and high-quality early childhood system. Policies that strengthen benefits, support retirement planning/saving, and recognize the essential contributions of family child care providers can help sustain this vital segment of Illinois' workforce and ensure continued access to care for families.

When it comes to compensation, patterns of compensation for center positions varied. All noted positions saw an increase in wages. Per the FY 2025 survey, the mean hourly wages of director/teacher saw the largest increase from the FY 2023 survey. All other positions also saw increases, with school age assistant having the lowest increase compared to FY 2023. These trends highlight progress in addressing compensation challenges within the early childhood workforce. Continued attention to equitable and competitive wages across all roles is essential to improving retention and attracting qualified staff.

The median hourly wage for early childhood teachers in Illinois rose to \$19.00 in 2025, up from \$16.50 in 2023, \$14.29 in 2021, \$13.00 in 2019, \$12.50 in 2017, and \$12.00 in 2015. For a full-time position (40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year), this equates to a gross annual salary of approximately \$39,520. By comparison, licensed family child care providers reported median net annual earnings between \$20,000 and less than \$30,000 in 2025, reflecting an increase from \$13,985.85 in 2023, \$14,000 in 2021 and \$12,000 in 2019 and 2017. This sustained growth demonstrates meaningful progress in compensation for center-based early childhood teachers; however, they also highlight persistent wage disparities between center staff and family child care providers. These gaps need to be addressed through targeted policies and funding support.

Compensation for early childhood teachers varies significantly across Illinois. For example, teachers in Bloomington in central Illinois earned a median hourly wage of \$17.25, compared with \$19.25 in Addison in northern Illinois—a difference of \$2.00 per hour. Educational attainment also plays a critical role in earnings: teachers with higher levels of education consistently earn more than those without degrees. In addition, teachers who completed an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree in early childhood education (ECE) or child development (CD) earn higher wages than those with degrees in other fields.

In addition to the low wages of the child care workforce, being able to rely on benefit programs offered by employers is not a guarantee. Although at least 83 percent of centers reported offering paid vacation, holidays, or sick leave, only 65.0 percent offered a retirement/pension plan, and 58.5 percent offered health insurance. Life insurance was offered by only 49.8 percent of centers. While centers may provide benefits to employees as part of their compensation, family child care practitioners must pay for their own. Although 89.3 percent of family child care providers were covered by a health plan, many received coverage through their spouse's employer. Other benefits are modest for family child care providers who reported being closed only a median of 14 days per year. While 73.7 percent charged when closed for holidays, only 57.1 percent charged when closed for vacation. Substantially fewer charged when closed for sick days or training days. Providers indicated that they did not charge when closed because they were sensitive to their clients' financial situations and they did not think their clients would pay.

Consistent with findings from previous Illinois Salary and Staffing Surveys, low wages and limited benefits remain a primary concern among child care providers across the state. Beyond creating financial strain, inadequate compensation is widely perceived as a reflection of the broader undervaluing of the child care profession. Survey respondents consistently expressed deep commitment to the well-being and development of the children in their care, yet emphasized the growing difficulty of sustaining a livelihood in the field. Many reported frustration and discouragement, calling for greater financial support, public awareness, and access to benefits that reflect the importance of their work. If these responses serve as an indicator, they suggest ongoing ambivalence among child care professionals—balancing dedication to their work with concerns about financial viability. Addressing fair compensation and benefits through intentional policy action is essential to improving workforce morale, strengthening retention, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Illinois' child care system.

While some survey findings highlight ongoing challenges, the results also point to meaningful progress and opportunities for continued advancement in Illinois' early childhood system. Increased awareness and utilization of state-supported initiatives—such as those offered through Gateways to Opportunity—demonstrate growing engagement with programs designed to strengthen the workforce and offset the impact of low wages and limited benefits. These supports play a critical role in improving professional development, retention, and quality across child care settings. Illinois continues to invest in a range of initiatives that promote education, retention, and quality improvement among early childhood professionals. The Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program provides partial college scholarships to center- and home-based practitioners pursuing degrees in early childhood or school-age education. The Great START wage supplement program rewards educational achievement and job stability through stipends distributed every six months to eligible providers who remain in their current positions. ExceleRate Illinois further supports the child care system by providing supplemental funding to programs that serve families receiving Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) subsidies and demonstrate quality improvement, while also offering recognition and technical support. Additionally, Gateways Credentials formally acknowledge the education, experience, and professional contributions of practitioners, and the ExceleRate Illinois Circles of Quality link credential attainment to quality standards beyond basic licensure.

The Illinois Smart Start Child Care initiative, an existing support that was announced in 2023, represents a major policy step toward strengthening Illinois' early childhood system. By expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care and directing new resources toward wage increases through grants to programs statewide, Smart Start Child Care directly addresses two of the field's most pressing issues, compensation, and workforce retention. Together, these initiatives form a comprehensive policy framework aimed at elevating the child care profession, reducing turnover, and ensuring that every child and family in Illinois benefits from a strong and stable early learning system.

# Appendix A: Survey Instruments

## FY 2025 Child Care Center Survey

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

FISCAL YEAR 2025 ILLINOIS CHILD CARE SALARY AND STAFFING SURVEY

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Thank you for taking valuable time out of your busy schedule to complete this survey. Your investment of time will contribute to knowledge that will improve the conditions and address the needs of all child care providers in Illinois. The survey will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. It need not be completed at one sitting, but we ask that you return it to us within 2 weeks of receiving it. Please read the following tips for success:
- Try to answer each question as accurately as possible.
- You may skip a question if you do not wish to answer, but we encourage you to respond knowing that your answers will be kept confidential.
- Please read and follow all directions carefully for each question. For some questions, you will need to check the appropriate box; for some questions, you will need to circle the appropriate number; and for some questions, you will need to write in the appropriate number or information requested.
- Please DO NOT write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. We have given each survey a number to help us keep track of which providers have returned their forms, and which need reminders. All information will be kept confidential.
- Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, stamped envelope to

Rachel Salrin  
INCCRRA  
1226 Towanda Avenue  
Bloomington, IL 61701

- If you have questions or any trouble with the survey, you can reach us via email at [salariesurvey@incrra.org](mailto:salariesurvey@incrra.org). You can also call and speak with Betty Akamani at (309) 430-6380.

Thank you again for your participation!

Please return by June 30, 2025!

PERSONAL PROFILE

1. What is your title? (select one)

Owner

Director

Owner/Director

Director/Teacher

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many years of experience do you have in a child care administrative role?

3. What is your total number of years of experience in child care (this includes administrative and non-administrative experience)?

4. What County does your program operate in?

ABOUT YOUR PROGRAM

1. How long has your program (site) been in operation?

1 year or less

2-3 years

4-6 years

7-10 years

Over 10 years

2. What is the operation schedule of your center? (select one)

Full-Day (8 or more hours), Full-Year (at least 47 weeks) only

Full-Day, Full-Year with separate Part-Day option

Part-Day only – nursery school, preschool, Head Start

Part-Day only – before- and/or after-school program

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which best describes your center? (select one)

For Profit – Private proprietary or partnership

For Profit – Corporation or chain

For Profit – Corporate sponsored

Private Non-Profit – Independent

Private Non-Profit – Affiliated with a social service agency or hospital

Public Non-Profit – Sponsored by federal, state, or local government

College or University affiliated

Military sponsored

Public school

4. Is your center associated with a faith-based organization?

Yes No

5. Is your center... (select one)

a single-site program?

part of a multi-site program?

If your center is part of a multi-site program, what is the name of the parent organization?

6. Please check ALL current sources of funding received by your center:

Tuition-based (parent fees)

Illinois Department of Human Services vouchers/certificates (IDHS CCAP) and/or IDHS Site Contract

Chicago Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) Site Contract

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) vouchers/certificates

Head Start

Early Head Start

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Preschool for All (Early Childhood Block Grant)

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Preschool for All – Expansion (Early Childhood Block Grant)

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Prevention Initiative (Early Childhood Block Grant)

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Preschool for All (Early Childhood Block Grant)

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Private donations, private grants (e.g., foundations, United Way), or fundraising

Corporate/Employer subsidies

COVID-19 relief funds (Child Care Restoration Grant, Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant, Child Care Workforce Bonus, PPP, other CARES funding, etc.)

Smart Start Workforce Grants

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please estimate the percentage of funds you received last year, on average, from each of the following sources: (These should add up to 100%)

Parent fees \_\_\_\_\_%

IDHS CCAP Vouchers, Site Contract, or DFSS Site Contract \_\_\_\_\_%

DCFS Vouchers/Certificates \_\_\_\_\_%

Head Start or Early Head Start funds \_\_\_\_\_%

ISBE or CPS Preschool for All or Prevention Initiative funds \_\_\_\_\_%

Child and Adult Care Food Program \_\_\_\_\_%

Private donations, private grants (e.g., foundations, United Way), or fundraising \_\_\_\_\_%

Corporate/employer subsidies \_\_\_\_\_%

Other public funding (state, federal, or local money) \_\_\_\_\_%

COVID-19 relief funds (CCRG, SGCC, CCWB, PPP, other CARES funding, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_%

Smart Start Workforce Grants \_\_\_\_\_%

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_%

8. What are the approximate annual operating costs (expenses) for your center?

9. In the past two years, how much did your annual operating costs (expenses) change?  
Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed About the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

10. What are the approximate revenues (income) for your center?

11. In the past two years, how much did your annual revenues (income) change? Please  
respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed About the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

12. What are the approximate profits (net revenues) for your center?

13. In the past two years, how much did your annual profits (net revenues) change? Please  
respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed About the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

## ENROLLMENT

1. What is your current total enrollment?
2. Please estimate the number of children in your program in each category, these should add up to the total number of children you have enrolled.

African American or Black

Asian

Caucasian or White

Hispanic or Latino

Native American or Alaskan

Pacific Islander

Multi-Racial

Other

3. Do you have children in your program whose primary language is not English?  
Yes No

If yes, please respond to the statement for each language option below:

In my program I have children whose primary language is...

Arabic	Yes	No
Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin	Yes	No
Farsi	Yes	No
French	Yes	No
German	Yes	No
Hebrew	Yes	No
Hindi/Urdu	Yes	No

Japanese	Yes	No
Korean	Yes	No
Polish	Yes	No
Russian	Yes	No
Spanish	Yes	No
Ukrainian	Yes	No
Vietnamese	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____	Yes	No

4. Do you accept children in your program whose families receive IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or DCFS child care financial assistance (subsidy)?

Yes, and I have had subsidized children enrolled at some point in the last 2 years

Yes, but I have not had subsidized children enrolled in the last 2 years

No, I do not accept subsidized children

If yes, during a typical week, how many children who receive IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care subsidy do you care for?

If yes, during a typical week, how many families in your program receive child care subsidy (funding from government (IDHS and/or DCFS), employers, or local agencies)? Do not include discounts that you offer to families.

If yes, do you charge parents more than the amount paid for with subsidy (including the state payment and parent co-payment)?

Yes No

If no, why not? (select all that apply)

I don't know what the subsidy program is/I have never looked into it.

Program doesn't qualify (i.e., Head Start).

Subsidy families can't afford or won't pay the tuition balance.

We offer a negotiated reduced rate to families in need.

There are no interested families/families in need.

We don't have time for paperwork or the paperwork is too complicated.

We need weekly operating funds.

We have no openings.

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you served, or have served in the past two years, children whose families receive child care subsidy, how easy or difficult was it to collect the parents' share (co-payments, the difference between the state assistance and what you charge, etc.)?

Very Easy

Somewhat Easy

Neither Easy nor Difficult

Somewhat Difficult

Very Difficult

6. In the past two years, how has your experience changed with the difficulty in collecting the parents' share of child care costs for those families in your program who receive child care subsidy?

Much Easier

Somewhat Easier

About the Same

Somewhat More Difficult

Much More Difficult

7. In the past two years, how much has the number of vacancies changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

8. In the past two years, how much has your enrollment pattern changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

9. In the past two years, how much have staffing challenges impacted your program's enrollment pattern? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

10. In the past two years, how much has your current enrollment to your pre-pandemic enrollment changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

11. In the past two years, how much has the number of children with families receiving IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care subsidy changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

#### ABOUT YOUR STAFF

1. Please provide the number of staff members actively working in each category. (categories a-f are teaching/instructional staff defined by DCFS licensing regulations).

- a. Administrative Director
- b. Director/Teacher
- c. Early Childhood Teacher
- d. Early Childhood Assistant/Aide
- e. School-Age Worker
- f. School-Age Assistant/Aide
- g. Curriculum Coordinator
- h. Family Support/Parent Educator
- i. Cook
- j. Administrative Support/Secretary

- k. Building Support Staff (e.g., janitor, maintenance)
- l. Other
- 2. Of the staff in the categories listed above, how many lead teachers do you have?

Please use the following definition of a lead teacher:

“The lead teacher is the individual with the highest educational qualifications assigned to teach a group/classroom of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment, and curriculum planning.”

- Depending on the program, this individual may be called a head teacher, master teacher, or teacher
  - Each group/classroom will have one, and only one, lead teacher.
3. Do you contract for any of the following regularly-provided services for your center?  
(select all that apply)

Food service

Building cleaning

Outdoor/Grounds maintenance (including snow removal)

Nurse service

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many of your administrative and teaching/instructional staff (staff titles a-f above) have a second paying job outside of your center?

Number of staff \_\_\_\_\_ I don't know

5. How many staff in your program identify as male? List the number of staff within each category who identify as male.
- a. Administrative Director
  - b. Director/Teacher
  - c. Early Childhood Teacher
  - d. Early Childhood Assistant/Aide

- e. School-Age Worker
- f. School-Age Assistant/Aide
- 6. How many staff in your program can read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English? List the number of staff within each category who are proficient in a non-English language.

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant/Aide

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant/Aide

7. If you have staff who can read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English, please identify the language(s) they are proficient in:

Arabic	Yes	No
Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin	Yes	No
Farsi	Yes	No
French	Yes	No
German	Yes	No
Hebrew	Yes	No
Hindi/Urdu	Yes	No
Japanese	Yes	No
Korean	Yes	No
Polish	Yes	No
Russian	Yes	No
Spanish	Yes	No
Ukrainian	Yes	No
Vietnamese	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____	Yes	No

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following questions refer to administrative and teaching staff.

1. Have you heard of the following programs and services?

Gateways to Opportunity Registry	Yes	No
Great START	Yes	No
Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program	Yes	No

Gateways to Opportunity Credentials (i.e., Illinois Director Credential, ECE Credential, Infant Toddler Credential) Yes No

Professional Development Advisor (PDA) Program Yes No

ExceleRate Illinois Yes No

Consultants/Specialists available through your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (i.e., Mental Health Consultant, Quality Specialist, Infant Toddler Specialist) Yes No

Online trainings through iLearning Yes No

2. Have you heard of the following Provider Services Funds available through your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency?

Quality Improvement Funds Yes No

Individual Professional Development Funds Yes No

First Aid/CPR Funds Yes No

3. Do you provide your teaching/instructional staff with funding to take off-site training or college coursework (e.g., paying for registration fees, tuition reimbursement, etc.)?

Yes No

4. Do you provide your teaching/instructional staff with paid time off to take off-site training or college coursework?

Yes No

5. In the last year, did you or any of your staff receive any training in early childhood education, child development, or health education from the following sources? (select all that apply)

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) training

Training at professional association meetings or conferences

Local community training Online training

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) training

6. How satisfied are you with the number of curriculum topics for training offerings available to you and your staff?

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

7. How satisfied are you with the number of trainings in each level (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) of training offerings available to you and your staff?

Very dissatisfied; Dissatisfied; Neutral; Satisfied; Very Satisfied

Beginner trainings

Intermediate trainings

Advanced trainings

8. Do you participate in a local professional child care network/organization?

Yes No

#### PAY SCALE AND WAGES

1. Do you have a pay scale (hourly or annually) that you share with your staff? Yes No

If you DO have pay scale, is it differentiated by: (select all that apply)

Education level

Attainment of a Gateways Credential

Attainment of other industry-recognized credentials (e.g., CDA, professional educator license)

Level of experience

Additional or supplementary training

Other (please specify)

If you DO NOT have a pay scale, do you have something other than a pay scale?

Yes No

If you use something other than a pay scale, please specify what you do use.

2. For each position listed (as defined in DCFS licensing), what is the a) starting wage/salary for the position and b) highest wage/salary for the position? Please check the box to indicate whether you are providing an amount that is an hourly wage or an annual salary.

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant/Aide

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant/Aide

#### STAFF TURNOVER AND REPLACEMENT

1. How many staff members have left your program in the last 24 months? Please refer to your permanent full-time and part-time staff members, not temporary, substitute, or seasonal staff.

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant/Aide

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant/Aide

Other (please specify)

2. Of the total number of staff above that left your program, how many left...

Of their own choosing (voluntarily)

Not of their own choosing (terminated or asked to resign)

3. Of the staff that left your program of their own choosing, how many staff in each role left for each reason listed? Please indicate only the primary reason staff left your program.

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

Dissatisfied with wages

Dissatisfied with benefits

Dissatisfied with work schedule or availability of hours

Not enough opportunities for professional development or growth

Unhappy with the job duties

Burnout

Retirement

Personal or family issues

Staying at home with their own children

Desired a remote and/or hybrid work setting

Unknown / did not share a reason

Other

Please share any comments you have:

4. Of the staff that left your program of their own choosing, how many...

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

Opened their own child care center or family child care home

Went to work at a different child care center

Went to work within the public school system

Went to work within the public school system

Found another job within the field of early care and education (not in a child care center, family child care home, or public school)

Found another job outside of the field of early care and education

Moved out of the area

Went back to school

Took a position that offered benefits

Took a remote and/or hybrid position

Unknown / did not share

Other

Please share any comments you have:

5. For each employee category, please indicate the total number of applicants who applied for vacancies in the past two years.

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood

Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

Number of DCFS-qualified applicants

Number of program qualified applicants (e.g., Head Start)

Number of non-qualified applicants

6. For each employee category, please indicate the number of applicants who identify as male who applied for vacancies in the past two years.

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood

Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

7. For each employee category, please indicate the number of applicants who read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English who applied for vacancies in the past two years.

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood

Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

8. If any applicants read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English applied for vacancies in the last two years, please list the languages they were proficient in:

Arabic	Yes	No
Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin	Yes	No
Farsi	Yes	No
French	Yes	No
German	Yes	No
Hebrew	Yes	No
Hindi/Urdu	Yes	No
Japanese	Yes	No
Korean	Yes	No
Polish	Yes	No
Russian	Yes	No
Spanish	Yes	No
Ukrainian	Yes	No
Vietnamese	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____	Yes	No

9. On average, how long did it take to fill vacancies for each category of staff from the start of your search to when the position was filled? For each category, select the appropriate time frame.

Less than one Week    1-2 weeks    3-4 weeks    More than 4 weeks    Not applicable

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant

10. For each of the following staff categories, please report the number of hires who identify as male you have had in the past two years:

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood

Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

11. For each of the following staff categories, please report the number of hires who read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English you have had in the past two years:

Admin. Director: Director/Teacher; Early Childhood Teacher; Early Childhood

Assistant; School-Age Worker; School-Age Assistant

12. If there were any applicants you hired who read and/or write proficiently in a language other than English, please identify the language(s) they were/are proficient in:

Arabic	Yes	No
Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin	Yes	No
Farsi	Yes	No
French	Yes	No
German	Yes	No
Hebrew	Yes	No
Hindi/Urdu	Yes	No
Japanese	Yes	No
Korean	Yes	No
Polish	Yes	No
Russian	Yes	No
Spanish	Yes	No
Ukrainian	Yes	No

Vietnamese Yes No

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes No

13. Has the length of time to fill a vacancy changed over the last two years? For each category of staff, circle how long, on average, it took to fill the vacancy compared to two years ago.

Decreased by more than 2 weeks; Decreased by 1-2 weeks; Stayed the same;

Increased by 1-2 weeks; Increased by more than 2 weeks; Not applicable

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant

14. In the past two years, how easy or difficult has it been to fill positions for each staff category? For each category, circle the response that best reflects your experience:

Very Easy; Somewhat Easy; Neither Easy nor Difficult; Somewhat Difficult;

Very Difficult; Not Applicable

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant

15. Have the staff you have hired in the past two years met or exceeded qualifications required in the DCFS licensing standards? For each category of staff, write in the number of staff you have hired who met, exceeded, or did not meet DCFS qualifications.

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant

16. Of those staff you hired that did not meet DCFS qualifications, how many continued education and/or training to meet DCFS qualifications? For each category of staff, write in the number of staff you have hired who continued education to meet DCFS qualifications.

Admin. Director:     Director/Teacher;     Early Childhood Teacher;     Early Childhood Assistant;     School-Age Worker;     School-Age Assistant

17. Over the past two years, how have the qualifications of your new hires changed compared to those you hired more than two years ago? Circle the response that best reflects your opinion:

Much Less Qualified;     Somewhat Less Qualified;     Same Qualifications;     Somewhat More Qualified;     Much More Qualified;     Not Applicable

Administrative Director

Director/Teacher

Early Childhood Teacher

Early Childhood Assistant

School-Age Worker

School-Age Assistant

18. In your opinion, what reasons might people be less attracted to employment in the child

care field? Please indicate how important on a scale from 1 = “Not Important” to 5 = “Very Important” you believe each reason is by circling a response.

Career opportunities in centers are not known.

Career opportunities are better in other professions or other child-oriented settings.

Child care does not have a well-known career pathway.

Salaries are low.

Benefits are not adequate.

Job openings in centers are not well advertised.

Job seekers are looking for remote and/or hybrid job opportunity.

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### BENEFITS OFFERED TO STAFF

1. For each of the benefits listed below, check whether your program offers that benefit to staff or whether that benefit is not offered to staff. Please respond based on what is offered/not offered for full-time staff and what is offered/not offered for part-time staff, as indicated below.

Free child care

Reduced child care fees

Paid sick days

Paid holidays

Over 40 hours of paid personal/vacation time off (that goes beyond the Illinois Paid Leave for All)

Paid time off for trainings

Periodic increase in wages based on performance

Yearly cost-of-living increase in wages

Increase in wages based on educational advancement



1226 Towanda Avenue

Bloomington, IL 61701

If you have any questions, please call Betty Akamani at (309) 430-6380 or your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

# **FY 2025 Licensed Child Care Centers Glossary (Alphabetized)**

## Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Titles

### Administrative Director

Oversees the program and administers day-to-day operations. They shall be responsible for the planning and supervision of the program and activities of the children; orientation to newly employed staff; on-site supervision of all staff; and in-service training totaling a minimum of 15 clock hours per year for each member of the child care staff. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.90b)

Day care centers licensed for more than 50 children shall employ a full-time child care director to be on site in a non-teaching capacity. The director may be on site in a teaching capacity at the following times: During the first hour and last hour of a program that operates 10 or more hours per day; or when attendance falls below 50 children. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.130a)

#### Additional Clarification:

If the director's full purpose is to be administrative (not in the classroom), then the individual can be listed with the Administrative Director role.

If they are "director qualified" and act more as a backup if the director is not on-site but otherwise are typically in a teaching role, list them as an Early Childhood Teacher.

### Director/Teacher

Day care centers licensed for 50 or fewer children, or half-day programs with children attending no more than 3 consecutive hours per day regardless of capacity, may employ a child care director who also serves as a member of the child care staff. When the director serves in both capacities, he or she must meet the qualifications of both the director position and the teaching position. When the director attends to non-teaching responsibilities, his or her group must be supervised by a person qualified to be in charge of a group. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.130b)

### Early Childhood Teacher

A staff member responsible for a group of infants, toddlers, or preschool children. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.45)

### Early Childhood Assistant/Aide

A staff member who works under the direct supervision of an early childhood teacher and does not assume responsibility for a group of children. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.45)

### School-Age Worker

A staff member who has lead responsibility for a group of school-age children. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.45)

### School-Age Assistant/Aide

A staff member who works under the direct supervision of a school-age worker. (DCFS Licensing Standards, Section 407.45)

### Local Professional Child Care Network/Organization

A nonprofit organization that supports certified child care professionals locally. This could include a daycare home provider association, Home Child Care Network, or accessing services through the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

### Number of Children vs. Number of Families Receiving Subsidy

Number of children refers to the number of children in your care whose parents receive any form of subsidy.

Number of families refers to the number of families in your care who receive any form of subsidy.

Example: If 4 children in your care have subsidy payments but they are all siblings, you would mark the number of children receiving subsidy as 4 and the number of families receiving subsidy as 1.

# FY 2025 Family Child Care Homes Survey

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

FISCAL YEAR 2025 ILLINOIS CHILD CARE SALARY AND STAFFING SURVEY

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Thank you for taking valuable time out of your busy schedule to complete this survey. Your investment of time will contribute to knowledge that will improve the conditions and address the needs of all child care providers in Illinois. The survey will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. It need not be completed at one sitting, but we ask that you return it to us within 2 weeks of receiving it. Please read the following tips for success:
- Try to answer each question as accurately as possible.
- You may skip a question if you do not wish to answer, but we encourage you to respond knowing that your answers will be kept confidential.
- Please read and follow all directions carefully for each question. For some questions, you will need to check the appropriate box; for some questions, you will need to circle the appropriate number; and for some questions, you will need to write in the appropriate number or information requested.
- Please DO NOT write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. We have given each survey a number to help us keep track of which providers have returned their forms and which need reminders. All information will be kept confidential.
- Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, stamped envelope to:

Rachel Salrin

INCCRRA

1226 Towanda Avenue

Bloomington, IL 61701

- If you have questions or any trouble with the survey, you can reach us via email at [salarysurvey@incrra.org](mailto:salarysurvey@incrra.org). You can also call and speak with Betty Akamani at (309) 430-6380.

Thank you again for your participation!

Please return by June 30, 2025!

ENROLLMENT

1. What County does your program operate in?
2. During a typical week, what is the largest number of children in your care at any time (excluding your own children)?
3. Please estimate the number of children in your program in each category.

African American or Black

Asian

Caucasian or White

Hispanic or Latino

Native American or Alaskan

Pacific Islander

Multi-Racial

Other

4. Do you have children in your program whose primary language is not English?

Yes No

If yes, please respond to the statement for each language option below:

In my program I have children whose primary language is... (select all that apply)

Arabic	Yes	No
Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin	Yes	No
Farsi	Yes	No
French	Yes	No
German	Yes	No
Hebrew	Yes	No
Hindi/Urdu	Yes	No

Japanese	Yes	No
Korean	Yes	No
Polish	Yes	No
Russian	Yes	No
Spanish	Yes	No
Ukrainian	Yes	No
Vietnamese	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____	Yes	No

5. Do you accept children in your program whose families receive IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or DCFS child care financial assistance (subsidy)?

Yes, and I have had subsidized children enrolled at some point in the last 2 years

Yes, but I have not had subsidized children enrolled in the last 2 years

No, I do not accept subsidized children

If yes, during a typical week, how many children who receive IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care subsidy do you care for?

If yes, during a typical week, how many families in your program receive child care subsidy (funding from government, employers, or local agencies)? Do not include discounts that you offer to families.

If yes, do you charge parents more than the amount paid for with subsidy (including the state payment and parent co-payment)? Yes No

If no, why not? (select all that apply)

I don't know what the subsidy program is/I have never looked into it.

I don't qualify (i.e., Head Start).

Subsidy families can't afford or won't pay the tuition balance.

I offer a negotiated reduced rate to families in need.

There are no interested families/families in need.

I don't have time for paperwork or the paperwork is too complicated.

I need weekly operating funds.

I have no openings.

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. If you served, or have served in the past two years, children whose families receive child care subsidy, how easy or difficult was it to collect the parents' share (co-payments, the difference between the state assistance and what you charge, etc.)?

Very Easy

Somewhat Easy

Neither Easy nor Difficult

Somewhat Difficult

Very Difficult

7. In the past two years, how has your experience changed with the difficulty in collecting the parents' share of child care costs for those families in your program who receive child care subsidy?

Much Easier

Somewhat Easier

About the Same

Somewhat More Difficult

Much More Difficult

8. In the past two years, how much has the number of vacancies changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

9. In the past two years, how much has your enrollment pattern changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

10. In the past two years, how much has the number of children with families receiving IDHS CCAP and/or DCFS child care financial assistance (subsidy) changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the Same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

ASSISTANTS

8. How many paid assistant caregivers do you have? (If you have no paid assistants, write "0")

If you do have paid assistants, how much, on average, do you pay your assistants? (per hour)

If you do have paid assistants, how many hours during an average week do assistants work with you? (hours)

2. How many unpaid assistant caregivers do you have? (If you have no unpaid assistants, write "0")

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

9. In the last year, did you participate in any training in early childhood education, child development, or health education from the following? If you did participate, how useful did you find each type of training?

Not at All; A Little; Somewhat; Very

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) training Yes No

Local community training Yes No

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) training Yes No

Training at professional association meetings or conferences Yes No

Online training Yes No

If you selected any of the above, approximately how many hours of training did you attend last year?

10. In the last two years, have you completed any college coursework in early childhood education or child development? Yes No

If yes, how many credit hours did you complete in early childhood education or child development in the last two years? (report only by the type of credits you earned; if you earned semester hours you do not need to convert into quarter hours, and if you earned quarter hours you do not need to convert into semester hours)

Semester Hours \_\_\_\_\_

Quarter Hours \_\_\_\_\_

11. How satisfied are you with the training opportunities offered to meet the specific needs of family child care providers?

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

12. What difficulties, if any, have you had trying to find appropriate training or educational opportunities? (select all that apply)

My community does not have enough courses or workshops.

I am unaware of training offerings in my area.

The cost of training is too high.

There are not enough curriculum offerings.

The trainings I can find are not relevant to family child care providers.

Most opportunities are during the day so it is difficult for me to attend.

I am unable to take time away from my family to take more training.

I am unable to take time away from my work to take more training.

There is no reason to pursue more training.

Technology issues

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### EARNINGS AND BENEFITS

1. What are your gross annual earnings (income before taxes and expenses, not money from Great START or Gateways Scholarship Program) from your child care program?

2. What are your annual expenses (such as food, utilities, insurance, or materials) to provide care, not including your wages?
3. What are your net annual earnings (income after taxes and expenses, not money from Great START or Gateways Scholarship Program) from your child care program after deducting costs of providing care?
4. In the past two years, how much have your gross annual earnings changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

5. In the past two years, how much have your annual expenses changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

6. In the past two years, how much have your net annual earnings changed? Please respond by circling your response on the following scale:

Decreased Greatly

Decreased Somewhat

Stayed the same

Increased Somewhat

Increased Greatly

Not Applicable

7. On average, how many hours per week were you paid for taking care of children (not counting your own children)?
8. On average, how many hours per week did you spend on different aspects of your child care business after the children leave or before they arrive (such as preparing food for the children, shopping, cleaning, record keeping, or preparing education activities)?
9. How many weeks per year do you operate? (use whole numbers only between 1 and 52)
10. Do you provide non-traditional hour care (caring for children at any point between 6:01 pm – 5:59 am on weekdays OR any time on weekends)? (select one).

I am open at some point between 6:01 pm and 5:59 am on weekdays.

I am open at some point on weekends.

I am open at some point between 6:01 pm and 5:59 am on weekdays AND weekends.

I do not provide any non-traditional hour care.

11. Please respond to the statement with each option below:

Are you paid when...

Children are absent because they are sick? Yes No

Children are on vacation? Yes No

You are closed for holidays? Yes No

You are closed for vacation days? Yes No

You are closed for sick days? Yes No

You are closed for training days? Yes No

You are closed for other reasons? Yes No

If yes, please specify the other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you charge extra when children are picked up late or dropped off early? Yes No

If yes, approximately how much per minute?

13. Do you close for any of the following reasons below? If yes, please also write in the number of days per year you are closed for that reason. (If not closed for a reason listed, enter a 0).

Holidays Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ days per year No

Vacation Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ days per year No

Sick Days Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ days per year No

Training Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ days per year No

Other Days Off Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ days per year No

14. Do you participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? Yes No

15. Do you contribute to Social Security and/or Medicare for yourself? Yes No

16. In the last year, have you set aside any savings for your retirement? Yes No

17. Are you currently covered by any kind of health insurance or medical plan? Yes No

If yes, who pays for your health insurance? (select all that apply)

My spouse's employer pays 100%

My spouse's employer pays a partial amount

I purchase my own health insurance

I have Medicaid/Medicare

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

18. In the past two years, have you received any of the following types of financial assistance?

Medicaid/Medicare for yourself Yes No

Medicaid for your child(ren) Yes No

Food stamps/SNAP	Yes	No
AllKids for your child(ren)	Yes	No
COVID relief funding (Child Care Restoration Grant, Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant, Child Care Workforce Bonus, PPP, etc.)	Yes	No
Smart Start Workforce Grants	Yes	No
Other (please specify) _____	Yes	No

19. Do you have any other paid jobs, in addition to providing child care in your home?  
 Yes No

20. Does at least one other adult in your household contribute to your household income?  
 Yes No

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

- Do you have at least one other child care provider you can talk to if you have a problem in your program? Yes No
- Do you participate in a local professional child care network/organization? Yes No
- In the past two years, have you contacted your local child care resource and referral agency for help or information when you have had a question or problem? Yes No
- Have you heard of the following programs and services?

Gateways to Opportunity Registry	Yes	No
Great START	Yes	No
Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship Program	Yes	No
Gateways to Opportunity Credentials (i.e., Illinois Director Credential, ECE Credential, Infant Toddler Credential, Family Child Care Credential)	Yes	No
Professional Development Advisor (PDA) Program	Yes	No
ExceleRate Illinois	Yes	No

Consultants/Specialists available through your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (i.e., Mental Health Consultant, Quality Specialist, Infant Toddler Specialist) Yes No

Online trainings through iLearning Yes No

5. How much longer do you think you will continue to offer child care in your home?

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_ I don't know

6. In the past two years, have you considered no longer providing care? Yes No

If you have considered no longer providing care in the past two years, why? How important, on a scale from 1 = "Not Important" to 5 = "Very Important" are each of the following in your consideration for no longer providing care?

Dissatisfied with income

Dissatisfied with benefits

Dissatisfied with retirement savings

Want to go back to school

Working hours are too long

Not enough work hours

Enrollments are too low

Enrollments are too high

Frustration with parents

Too little respect for what child care providers do

Health problems

Moving/Relocating

Mental health issues

Too little time off

Isolation

I am at retirement age

Other personal reason(s)

Other reason(s) (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you have considered no longer providing care in the past two years, how important, on a scale from 1 = “Not Important” to 5 = “Very Important” would each of the following be to make you want to continue providing child care?

Help with problem solving (e.g., business needs, child guidance, subsidy advice)

More contact with other providers

A substitute to allow me time off

Being part of a professional organization

Access to family child care training

Lower enrollments

Higher enrollments

Higher income

Better benefits

More time off

More work hours

Other reason(s) (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. In the past two years, have opportunities for child care providers become better, stayed the same, or become worse? (select one)

Better

Stayed the Same

Worse

Please explain your selection:

8. Rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about providing child care by circling the number that best corresponds with your opinion. Note that 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree”.

I consider myself an early childhood educator/professional.

I consider myself a small business owner.

Getting more training helps me become a stronger professional.

Because I am my own boss, I can set my rates and policies to meet my needs.

I provide child care to earn an income.

I provide child care to stay at home with my children/grandchildren.

I enjoy caring for and teaching children.

I like being in business for myself.

#### PERSONAL PROFILE

1. How old are you? (select one)

19 years and under

40-49 years

20-29 years

50-59 years

30-39 years

60 years and over

2. What is your gender? (select one)

Female

Male

Non-binary

Prefer to self-describe \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (select one)

African American or Black

Pacific Islander

Asian

Multi-Racial

Caucasian or White

Other

Hispanic or Latino

Prefer to not answer

Native American or Alaskan

4. Is your primary language English? Yes No

If no, which language is your primary language? (select one)

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| Arabic                                 | Japanese   |
| Chinese dialect: Cantonese or Mandarin | Korean     |
| Farsi                                  | Polish     |
| French                                 | Russian    |
| German                                 | Spanish    |
| Hebrew                                 | Ukrainian  |
| Hindi/Urdu                             | Vietnamese |

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. How long have you been taking care of children in your home for an income? (years)

6. Have you ever been employed as a child care center teacher, child care center assistant, or child care center director or as a public school teacher? Yes No

If yes, for how many years?

7. How long has your program (site) been in operation?

1 year or less

2-3 years

4-6 years

7-10 years

Over 10 years

**PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK!**

1. INCCRRA and IDHS are constantly looking for ways to improve the survey and would love your feedback! INCCRRA is looking for providers to volunteer their time to provide



# FY 2025 Licensed Family Child Care Homes Glossary (Alphabetized)

## Local Professional Child Care Network/Organization

A nonprofit organization that supports certified child care professionals locally. This could include a daycare home provider association, Home Child Care Network, or accessing services through the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

## Number of Children vs. Number of Families Receiving Subsidy

Number of children refers to the number of children in your care whose parents receive any form of subsidy.

Number of families refers to the number of families in your care who receive any form of subsidy.

Example: If 4 children in your care have subsidy payments but they are all siblings, you would mark the number of children receiving subsidy as 4 and the number of families receiving subsidy as 1.

## Types of Financial Assistance

### COVID relief funding

Please click the links below for additional information if needed.

[Child Care Restoration Grant](#)

[Child Care Workforce Bonus](#)

[Paycheck Protection Program](#)

[Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grant](#)

### FamilyCare for yourself

Offers healthcare coverage to parents living with their children 18 years old or younger. FamilyCare also covers relatives who are caring for children in place of their parents. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

### Food stamps/SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

#### Medicaid vs. Medicare

Medicare is federal health insurance for anyone 65 and older, and some people under 65 with certain disabilities or conditions. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

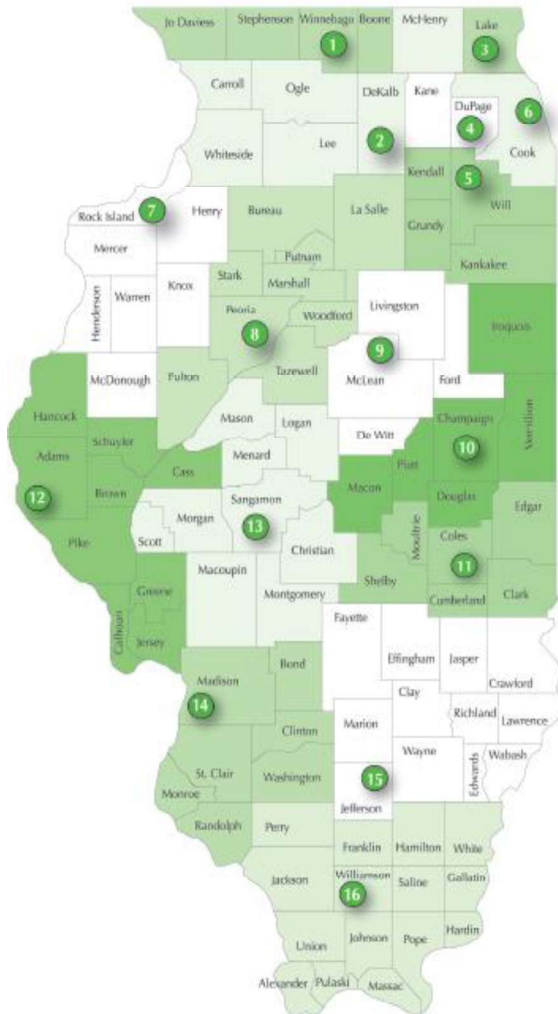
Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides health coverage for some people with limited income and resources. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

#### Smart Start Workforce Grants

Offers child care programs stable, ongoing funds that they need to cover costs and invest in quality staff without burdening families by raising tuition or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) co-pays. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

# Appendix B: Child Care Resource and Referral System Map<sup>51</sup>

## Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies



**SDA 1**  
YWCA Northwestern Illinois  
Child Care Solutions  
(Rockford)  
888-225-7072  
[www.ywcanwil.org](http://www.ywcanwil.org)

**SDA 2**  
4-C: Community Coordinated  
Child Care  
(DeKalb)  
800-848-8727  
&  
(McHenry)  
866-347-2277  
[www.four-c.org](http://www.four-c.org)

**SDA 3**  
YWCA Lake County CCR&R  
(Gurnee)  
844-221-2227  
[www.ywachicago.org](http://www.ywachicago.org)

**SDA 4**  
YWCA CCR&R  
(Addison)  
844-221-2227  
[www.ywachicago.org](http://www.ywachicago.org)

**SDA 5**  
Joliet CCR&R  
(Joliet)  
800-552-5526  
[www.childcarehelp.com](http://www.childcarehelp.com)

**SDA 6**  
Illinois Action for Children  
(Chicago)  
312-823-1100  
[www.actforchildren.org](http://www.actforchildren.org)

**SDA 7**  
Child Care Resource & Referral  
of Northwestern Illinois  
(Moline)  
866-370-4556  
[www.childcareillinois.org](http://www.childcareillinois.org)

**SDA 8**  
SAL Child Care Connection  
(Peoria)  
800-421-4371  
[www.salchildcareconnection.org](http://www.salchildcareconnection.org)

**SDA 9**  
CCR&RN  
(Bloomington)  
800-437-8256  
[www.ccrn.com](http://www.ccrn.com)

**SDA 10**  
Child Care Resource Service  
University of Illinois  
(Urbana)  
<https://ccrs.illinois.edu>

**SDA 11**  
CCR&R  
Eastern Illinois University  
(Charleston)  
800-545-7439  
<https://www.eiu.edu/ccrr/>

**SDA 12**  
West Central Child Care Connection  
(Quincy)  
800-782-7318  
[www.wcccc.com](http://www.wcccc.com)

**SDA 13**  
Community Child Care Connection  
(Springfield)  
800-676-2805  
[www.4childcare.org](http://www.4childcare.org)

**SDA 14**  
Children's Home + Aid  
(Granite City)  
800-467-9200  
[www.childrenshomeandaid.org](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org)

**SDA 15**  
Project CHILD  
(Mt. Vernon)  
800-362-7257  
[www.projectchild.net](http://www.projectchild.net)

**SDA 16**  
CCR&R  
John Logan College  
(Carterville)  
800-548-5563  
[www.ccrjalc.com](http://www.ccrjalc.com)

<sup>51</sup> SDAs 3 and 4 were combined for this report.

# Appendix C: Licensing Standards for Center Staffing

From Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers April 1, 2010 – P.T. 2010.04

## Joint Committee on Administrative Rules ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

TITLE 89: SOCIAL SERVICES  
CHAPTER III: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
SUBCHAPTER e: REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE  
PART 407 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR DAY CARE CENTERS

Section 407.130      Qualifications for Child Care Director

- a) Day care centers licensed for more than 50 children shall employ a full-time child care director to be on site in a non-teaching capacity. The director may be on site in a teaching capacity at the following times:
  - 1) During the first hour and last hour of a program that operates 10 or more hours per day; or
  - 2) When attendance falls below 50 children.
- b) Day care centers licensed for 50 or fewer children, or half-day programs with children attending no more than 3 consecutive hours per day regardless of capacity, may employ a child care director who also serves as a member of the child care staff.
  - 1) When the director serves in both capacities, he or she must meet the qualifications of both the director position and the teaching position.
  - 2) When the director attends to non-teaching responsibilities, his or her group must be supervised by a person qualified to be in charge of a group.

- c) The child care director shall be at least 21 years of age.
- d) The child director shall have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate (GED).
- e) Directors hired on or after July 1, 2017, shall meet the following educational requirements:
  - 1) A minimum of an associate degree from an accredited college or university in child development or early childhood education; or
  - 2) The equivalent (defined as 64 semester hours or 96 quarter hours in any discipline, with a minimum of 21 semester hours or 31.5 quarter hours from an accredited college or university in courses related to child development, early childhood education, or early childhood special education) and one of the following:
    - A) Gateways to Opportunity Level I Illinois Director Credential; or
    - B) 3 semester hours or 4.5 quarter hours of college credit in child care administration, leadership, or management; or
    - C) 3 points of credential-approved training in child care administration, leadership, or management.
- f) The child care director of a facility serving more groups of school-age children than groups of pre-school children shall have achieved:
  - 1) A minimum of an associate degree from an accredited college or university in child development, early childhood education, or elementary education; or
  - 2) The equivalent (defined as 64 semester hours or 96 quarter hours in any discipline, with a minimum of 21 semester hours or 31.5 quarter hours from an accredited college or university in child development, early childhood education or early childhood special education, elementary education) and one of the following:
    - A) Gateways to Opportunity Level I Illinois Director Credential; or
    - B) 3 semester hours or 4.5 quarter hours of college credit in child care administration, leadership, or management; or
    - C) 3 points of credential-approved training in child care administration, leadership, or management.
- g) Montessori credentials for any ages between birth and 12 years, issued by a program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), or issued by the American Montessori Society (AMS) or the Association Montessori International (AMI) may be substituted for the courses directly related to child care and/or child development required by (e) and (f) of this Section.

- h) Directors hired prior to July 1, 2017 shall meet the requirements of Section 407.100, and, if serving as the child care director of a facility serving the same number of groups of pre-school and school-age children or more groups of pre-school children than groups of school-age children shall have achieved one of the following:
  - 1) 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of credit from an accredited college or university with 18 semester or 27 quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development from birth to age 6; or
  - 2) All of the following:
    - A) Two years (3120 clock hours) of child development experience in a nursery school, kindergarten, or licensed day care center; and
    - B) 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of college credits with 10 semester or 15 quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development; and
    - C) Proof of enrollment in an accredited college or university until 2 years of college credit have been achieved, with a total of 18 semester or 27 quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development obtained within the total 2 years of college credits; or
  - 3) All of the following:
    - A) Completion of a credentialing program approved in accordance with Appendix G of this Part; and
    - B) Completion of 12 semester or 18 quarter hours in courses related to child care and/or child development from birth to age 6 at an accredited college or university; and
    - C) Two years (3120 clock hours) child development experience in a nursery school, kindergarten, or licensed day care center.
- i) Persons who were deemed qualified to serve as a child care director prior to July 1, 2017, continue to be deemed qualified for their position as long as they remain employed with the same employer where they were deemed qualified prior to July 1, 2017. Directors deemed qualified must still complete the following trainings every 3 years:
  - 1) Mandated Reporter Training, including a section on implicit bias;
  - 2) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), and use of safe sleep recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics;

- 3) Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment; and
  - 4) Early childhood social emotional learning, infant and early childhood mental health, early childhood trauma, or adverse childhood experiences.
- j) Directors hired prior to July 1, 2017, shall meet the requirements of Section 407.100, and if serving as the child care director of a facility serving more groups of school-age children than groups of pre-school children shall have achieved one of the following:
- 1) 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of credit from an accredited college or university with 18 semester or 27 quarter hours in courses related to child care and/or child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping or other related fields, including courses related to school-age children; or
  - 2) All of the following:
    - A) Two years (3120 clock hours) of child development experience in a recreational program, kindergarten, or licensed day care center serving school-age children, or license exempt school-age child care program operated by a public or private school;
    - B) 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of college credits with 10 semester or 15 quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping, or other related fields; and
    - C) Proof of enrollment in an accredited college or university until 2 years of college credit have been achieved. A total of 18 semester or 27 quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping or other related fields, including courses related to school-age children, is required to be obtained within the total 2 years of college credits.
- k) When a program serves only school-age children and meets the criteria of Section 407.90(c), qualifications for the school-age director responsible for multiple sites and the site coordinators shall be as follows:
- 1) The school-age director and each site coordinator shall be at least 21 years of age.
  - 2) The school-age director shall meet the qualification criteria of Section 407.130(f) or (j).
  - 3) The school-age site coordinators must meet one of the following qualifications:
    - A) Both of the following:

- i) Thirty semester or 45 quarter hours of credit from an accredited college or university with 12 semester or 18 quarter hours related to school-age child care, child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping, or other related fields; and
    - ii) At least 750 clock hours of experience in a recreational program or a licensed day care center serving school-age children or in a license exempt school-age child care program operated by a public or private school; or
  - B) Both of the following:
    - i) At least 1560 clock hours of experience in a recreational program or licensed day care center serving school-age children or license exempt school-age child care program operated by a public or private school; and
    - ii) Either 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours of credit from an accredited college or university related to school-age child care, child development, elementary education, physical education, recreation, camping, or other related fields.
- l) A staff member who meets the qualifications for a day care center director shall be designated to assume decision-making responsibility whenever the child care director is off site.
  - 1) A record of employees who meet the qualifications for director and who have been designated to assume decision-making responsibility in the director's absence shall be kept in each designated employee's personnel file on the premises of the day care center.
  - 2) All day care staff shall be informed of the designated director at each occurrence.
  - 3) The person designated as alternate director may be in the classroom and counted in the staff/child ratio under the following circumstances:
    - A) The day care center is licensed for 50 or fewer children;
    - B) When the day care center operates a half-day program with children attending no more than 3 consecutive hours per day, regardless of capacity;
    - C) During the first hour and last hour of a program that operates eight or more hours per day; or
    - D) When attendance falls below 50 children.

4) Through June 30, 2029, a staff member who meets the qualifications of an early childhood teacher (as described in Section 407.140) may be designated to assume decision-making responsibility, that shall include opening and closing the facility, when the child care director is off site, if the day care center operates eight or more hours per day and the following provisions are met:

A) The staff member must have on file, documentation of a minimum of 2880 hours of experience as an early childhood teacher at the early childhood teacher's current facility; and

B) The early childhood teacher may only be present and assume decision-making responsibilities for the first and last hour of operation, that shall include opening and closing the facility, when a qualified director is not present; and

C) All requirements of subsection (1)(1), (2), and (3) of this Section are met .

m) The child care director must successfully complete a Department-approved basic training course of 6 or more clock hours on providing care to children with disabilities that has been approved by the Department. The day care center shall have on file a certificate attesting to the training of the child care director.

1) Persons employed as a child care director shall complete this training within 36 months from date appointed as child care director.

2) A child care director who has completed training prior to employment may have that training approved as meeting the provisions of this subsection (n). A certificate of training completion and a description of the course content must be submitted to the Department for approval.

3) A child care director who obtains approved training and moves from one licensed day care facility to another shall not be required to take another training course as long as the child care director can provide documentation in the form of a certificate that the training was completed.

4) A training program approved by the Department in providing care for children with disabilities must include the following components:

A) Introduction to Inclusive Child Care;

B) Understanding Child Development in Relation to Disabilities;

C) Building Relationships With Families;

D) Preparing for and Including Young Children in the Child Care Setting;  
and

E) Community Services for Young Children With Disabilities (including Early Intervention Services).

- n) With the exception of those facilities served by a director meeting the requirements of Section 407.130(g), licensed child care centers must have an employee on site at all times with a minimum of an associate degree from an accredited college or university in child development or early childhood education or the equivalent (defined as 64 semester hours or 96 quarter hours in any discipline with a minimum of 21 semester hours or 31.5 quarter hours of college credit in child development, early childhood education or early childhood special education).
- o) Directors shall submit to their local licensing office a certificate of completion of lead safety training consisting of instruction in the following topics:
  - 1) Mitigation plan strategies for test results of 2.01 ppb or above; and
  - 2) Impact of lead exposure.

(Source: Amended at 49 Ill. Reg. 8719, effective June 18, 2025)

# Appendix D: Licensing Standards for Family Child Care Homes

## ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

TITLE 89: SOCIAL SERVICES  
CHAPTER III: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
SUBCHAPTER e: REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE  
PART 406 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR DAY CARE HOMES  
SECTION 406.9 CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE DAY CARE  
FAMILY

### Section 406.9 Characteristics and Qualifications of the Day Care Family

- a) No individual may receive a license from the Department when the applicant, a member of the household age 13 and over, or any individual who has access to the children cared for in a day care home, or any employee of the day care home, has not authorized the background check required by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 385 (Background Checks) and been cleared in accordance with the requirements of Part 385.
- b) Employees subject to background checks may begin employment on a conditional basis while awaiting the results of the background check. The employees may not be alone with children until the results of the initial background check have been received.
- c) Persons who have been the perpetrator of certain types of child abuse or neglect or who have committed or attempted to commit certain crimes may not be licensed to operate a day care home, be a member of the household of a family home in which a day care home operates, or be an employee or volunteer in a day care home. These allegations/criminal convictions are listed in Appendix C of this Part.
- d) Day care homes shall be responsible for ensuring that persons subject to criminal background checks make themselves available for fingerprinting when scheduled by the Department or its authorized representatives. Failure of a person subject to criminal background checks to appear for scheduled fingerprinting may result in the denial of a license application or refusal to renew or revocation of an existing license unless the child care facility can demonstrate

that it took reasonable measures to insure cooperation with the fingerprinting process. Adequate cause for failure to appear for fingerprinting includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) death in the family of the person;
  - 2) serious illness of the person or illness in the person's immediate family; or
  - 3) weather or transportation emergencies.
- e) As a condition of licensure, each licensee or license applicant must certify under penalty of perjury that he or she is current or not more than 30 days delinquent in complying with a child support order. Failure to so certify may result in a denial of the license application, refusal to renew the license, or revocation of the license. (Section 10-65(c) of the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act [5 ILCS 100/10-65(c)])
- f) If the licensees or license applicants acknowledge that they are more than 30 days delinquent in complying with an order for child support or, upon completion of the background check, the licensees or license applicants are found to be delinquent despite their certification, the Department shall deny the application for license, refuse to renew the license, or revoke the license unless the licensees or license applicants arrange for payment of past due and current child support and pay child support in accordance with that agreement.
- g) Members of the household who have contact with the children in care shall treat them with respect, courtesy, and patience.
- h) The caregiver is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the day care home in accordance with the standards prescribed in this Part.
- i) The licensee shall be present in the home when day care children are in attendance unless a qualified substitute caregiver per Section 406.11 is present.
- j) The licensee and other adult members of the household in contact with day care children shall be stable, law abiding, responsible, mature individuals.
- k) The caregivers in a day care home shall be at least 18 years of age.
- l) Caregivers licensed after January 1, 2011 shall have proof of a high school diploma, equivalent certificate, or degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education or vocational institution.
- m) The caregivers and all members of the household shall provide medical evidence as required by Section 406.24(i) that they are free of reportable communicable disease, and, in the

case of caregivers, free of physical or mental conditions that could interfere with the child care responsibilities.

n) The licensee who is the primary caregiver shall be certified in first aid, the Heimlich maneuver and infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association or other entity approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

o) During the hours of operation of the day care home, there shall be at least one person on the premises certified in first aid, the Heimlich maneuver and infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association, or other entity approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health. The caregivers shall have on file current certificates attesting to the training.

p) The caregiver shall successfully complete a Department approved basic training course of 6 or more clock hours in providing care to children with disabilities. Refer to Appendix D for basic course requirements. The licensee shall have on file a certificate attesting to the successful completion of the training.

1) New licensee shall complete this training within 36 months from the issue date of the initial license.

2) A licensee who has completed training prior to November 15, 2003 may have that training approved as meeting the provisions of this Section. A certificate of training completion and a description of the course content must be submitted to the Department for approval.

q) Through interaction with the licensing representative, children, parents, or guardian of children in care and operation of the day care home in accordance with standards prescribed by this Part, caregivers shall exhibit competence in the following specific areas:

1) Knowledge of basic hygiene, safety, and nutrition.

2) The ability to relate comfortably with parents and to communicate with them on differences in caregiving methods, values, and goals.

3) The ability to communicate with children.

4) The ability to set realistic controls for children and to enforce these without harshness or physical abuse.

5) Knowledge of the child's need to explore and manipulate and the willingness to provide and maintain a home where children can enjoy living and learning.

- 6) Using developmentally appropriate behavior management techniques that do not constitute corporal punishment of children.
- r) The caregivers may not work or be employed outside the home during the hours the day care home is licensed. Outside employment during hours that child care is not being provided shall not interfere with child care.
- s) The caregiver shall be awake, alert, and able to supervise the children when providing care, except as allowed by Section 406.23(h).
- t) The caregivers shall complete 15 clock hours of in-service training per licensing year in accordance with the requirements in Appendix D.
  - 1) The training may be derived from programs offered by any of the entities identified in Appendix D.
  - 2) Courses or workshops to meet this requirement include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix D.
  - 3) The records of the day care home shall document the training in which the caregiver has participated, and these records shall be available for review by the Department.
  - 4) Caregivers obtaining clock hours in excess of the required 15 clock hours per year may apply up to 5 clock hours to the next year's training requirements.
  - 5) Licensees shall submit to the local licensing office a certificate of completion of lead safety training consisting of instruction in the following topics:
    - A) Mitigation plan strategies for test results of 2.01 ppb or above; and
    - B) Impact of lead exposure.
- u) Licensees or applicants shall not provide false or misleading information regarding their compliance with the applicable regulations.

(Source: Amended at 43 Ill. Reg. 187, effective January 1, 2019)

# Appendix E: Licensing Standards for Group Family Child Care Homes

## ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

TITLE 89: SOCIAL SERVICES  
CHAPTER III: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
SUBCHAPTER e: REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE  
PART 408 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR GROUP DAY CARE HOMES  
SECTION 408.45 CAREGIVERS

### Section 408.45 Caregivers

- a) The caregiver is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the group day care home in accordance with the standards prescribed in this Part.
- b) The caregiver or a designated child care assistant meeting the requirements of this Section shall be at the group day care home at all times that the group day care home is in operation, except when transporting children or accompanying them on field trips.
- c) The caregivers in a group day care home shall be at least 21 years of age.
- d) The caregivers shall have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- e) In addition to meeting the requirements of Sections 408.35 and 408.40 the caregiver in a group day home shall have achieved:
  - 1) One year (1560 clock hours) child development experience in a licensed day care home, nursery school, kindergarten, or licensed day care center plus 6 semester or equivalent quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development from an accredited college or university;
  - 2) One year (30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours) of credit from an accredited college or university with 6 semester or equivalent quarter hours related directly to child care and/or child development; or

- 3) Completion of a credentialing program approved in accordance with Appendix F.
- f) The caregivers shall complete 15 clock hours of in-service training per licensing year in accordance with the requirements in Appendix G.
- 1) The training may be derived from programs offered by any of the entities identified in Appendix G.
  - 2) Courses or workshops to meet this requirement include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix G.
  - 3) Licensees shall submit to the local licensing office a certificate of completion of lead safety training consisting of instruction in the following topics:
    - A) Mitigation plan strategies for test results of 2.01 ppb or above; and
    - B) Impact of lead exposure.
- g) Caregivers obtaining clock hours of training in excess of the required 15 clock hours per year may apply up to 5 clock hours to the next year's training requirements.
- h) The records of the group day care home shall document the continuing education in which the caregiver has participated, and these records shall be available for review by the Department.
- i) Through interaction with the licensing representative, children, parents, or guardian of children in care and operation of the group day care home in accordance with standards prescribed by this Part, caregivers shall exhibit competence in the following specific areas:
- 1) Knowledge of basic hygiene, safety, and nutrition;
  - 2) The ability to relate comfortably with parents and to communicate with them on differences in caregiving methods, values, and goals;
  - 3) The ability to communicate with children;
  - 4) The ability to set realistic controls for children and to enforce these without harshness or physical abuse;
  - 5) Knowledge of the children's need to explore and manipulate and the willingness to provide and maintain a home where children can enjoy living and learning; and
  - 6) Using developmentally appropriate behavior management techniques that do not constitute corporal punishment of children.

j) The caregivers shall be responsible for the planning and supervision of the program and activities of the children; orienting child care assistants and substitutes to the operation of the group day care home; on-site supervision of child care assistants; and in-service training totaling a minimum of 15 clock hours per year for the child care assistants. Orientation and training may be provided by the primary caregivers or outside resource persons and shall include recognizing and reporting child abuse or neglect, licensing standards prescribed by this Part, first aid, health and sanitation, fire prevention and safety procedures, special health, developmental, or nutritional needs of children cared for in the group day care home.

k) The caregivers may not work or be employed outside the home during the hours that child care is being provided. This restriction does not apply to spouses qualifying as caregivers, provided one of them is in the home during the hours that child care is being provided. Outside employment during hours that child care is not being provided shall not interfere with child care.

l) The caregiver shall be awake, alert, and able to supervise the children when providing care, except as allowed by Section 408.115.

(Source: Amended at 43 Ill. Reg. 265, effective January 1, 2019)

# Appendix F: Acknowledgements

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