

Illinois' Early Childhood Education Workforce

Executive Summary



2017 report

ABOUT INCCRRA AND GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is a statewide organization which—in partnership with 16 local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies—is a recognized leader, catalyst, and resource for making high quality, affordable early care and education and school-age care options available for children and families in Illinois. INCCRRA administers Gateways to Opportunity—a statewide professional development support system designed to provide guidance, encouragement, and recognition to individuals and programs serving children, youth, and families.

Executive Summary

The Gateways to Opportunity Registry was established in 2009 to be the statewide data system for collecting and reporting on the characteristics of the early childhood education workforce in Illinois. Development of the Gateways Registry was informed by a cross-sector committee of the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC), and included members representing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA), and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). In addition to those state agency partners, professional development agencies including Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies, STARNET, and both public and private early childhood education programs have been engaged in the work. This report – Illinois’ Early Childhood Education Workforce 2017 Report – is a result of the commitment to establishing a comprehensive workforce data repository through the Gateways Registry.

There has been tremendous growth in the Registry from 2009 to 2017 as it evolved from a voluntary system to being mandatory for several sectors within early childhood education. In 2012, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) implemented rule changes that required those working in licensed settings (center-based and home-based) to join and maintain membership in the Gateways Registry. In addition to DCFS, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) have also required Gateways Registry membership for specific groups of professionals under their purview, bringing the total number of active individual records close to 100,000.

The purpose of this report is to provide rich, descriptive data about Illinois’ early childhood education workforce, as shown by analysis of the data within the Gateways Registry. Several of the research questions from the Illinois Early Learning Council’s Research Agenda are addressed within this report, including:

- What are the demographics of program staff, directors, and family child care providers?
- What languages do program staff and directors speak?
- What education, preparation, and training have program staff, directors, and family child care providers received?
- What credentials do program staff, directors, and family child care providers currently have?
- What are the salaries provided?
- How long have staff been in their current program?

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Staff working in licensed child care settings are diverse, especially assistant teachers, family child care providers, and family child care assistants.**
 - Overall, 41.7% of licensed center assistant teachers, 54.6% of licensed family child care providers, and 64.5% of licensed family child care assistants reported being Black or Hispanic/Latino.
 - At a regional level, the diversity of teaching staff generally mirror the diversity of the population of Illinois as a whole, with staff in northern counties reflecting greater diversity than those in southern counties.

- 2. There is a strong bilingual population within the workforce.**
 - More than 10% of assistant teachers, family child care providers, and assistants reported speaking Spanish or another language as their primary language, and English as a second language.
 - In licensed child care centers, over half of the bilingual teaching staff were under the age of 35.

- 3. Directors and teachers in licensed center-based programs have high levels of education.**
 - Just over 71% of teachers and 84% of directors in licensed centers have completed an associate degree or higher.
 - Levels of education are relatively consistent across the studied geographic regions of Illinois. The exception was that teaching staff in the city of Chicago had higher levels of education. This is in part due to the greater proportion of programs in the city that receive multiple funding streams, which require additional educational qualifications for teachers and assistant teachers.

- 4. There has been a dramatic increase over the last two years in the percentage of the workforce that holds Gateways to Opportunity Credentials.**
 - The percent of licensed center directors holding a Gateways ECE Credential increased from 5% in 2015 to 26% in 2017. Teachers holding an ECE Credential increased from 4% to 23% during that same time period.
 - Nearly 20% of center directors now hold a Gateways Illinois Director Credential (IDC), compared to just 5% two years ago.

- 5. Quality professional development, in the form of Gateways Registry-approved training, is readily available and is a frequently utilized source of professional development for the workforce.**
 - More than 120 professional organizations and agencies now offer training that has been quality-assured through the Gateways Registry.

- Over 90% of staff working in licensed centers and family child care homes attended Registry-approved training in 2016.
- In 2016, more than half of the annual training hours required to work in a licensed setting were earned by attending Registry-approved training.

6. Wages are low compared to other occupations and vary based on education, attainment of Gateways Credentials, and ages of children served.

- The median hourly wage for teachers in licensed centers was \$12.50, but increased to \$13.64 for those with a bachelor's degree.
- Teachers who had earned an ECE Credential in addition to a bachelor's degree earn nearly \$1700 more per year than those with the degree alone.
- Licensed center teachers with an associate degree who work with infants and toddlers made \$12.00 per hour, while those working with preschoolers made \$12.46.

CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by the early childhood education workforce are varied and complex. Research clearly demonstrates how important qualified educators and caregivers are to a child's growth and development in their early years, as well as to their future success in school. Without a well-qualified and well-compensated workforce, the children of Illinois will not experience the full range of benefits that can be realized through high-quality early childhood education. It is our hope that this report will be a valuable resource for leaders and policy-makers to inform conversations that will further support and advance the early childhood education workforce in Illinois.

Download the full report at:
www.inccrra.org/data-reports/reports

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