



Promoting and nurturing early learning communities where children and families thrive.

Uncovering the Workforce Needs of Pacific Mountain's Early Childhood Education Industry:

A qualitative assessment of current hiring, retention, education and professional development needs in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston Counties, Washington

Prepared for the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, August 2018 by

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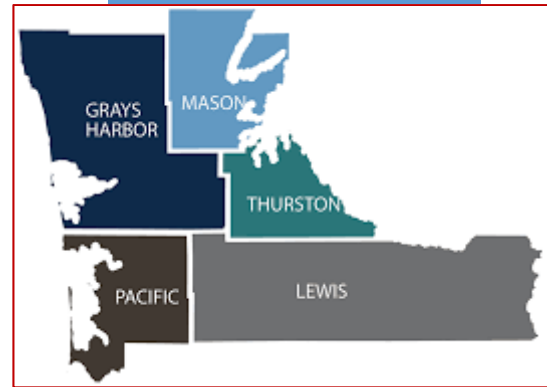
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Executive Summary

Recognizing the critical contributions made by the early childhood education industry (ECE industry) to the Pacific Mountain region's economy, this needs assessment documents current hiring and development conditions gathered by the Child Care Action Council (CCAC) through focus groups and interviews with an array of early childhood educators, including Head Start and ECEAP program directors, center directors, family child care owners, workers.



Key Facts about Pacific Mountain's ECE Industry

Across the Pacific Mountain region, 54-70% of children under age 6 have all custodial parents/guardians in the workforce.

There are fewer licensed child care facilities in the Pacific Mountain region today than there were 5 years ago. Tracking with a downward trend statewide in the aggregate number of licensed facilities, Pacific Mountain had 16 percent fewer in 2017 than it had in 2013. The decline statewide for this same period was about 10 percent.

There's pronounced consolidation in the private segment of the ECE industry. While the number of licensed facilities have declined, the supply of enrollment slots, that is –capacity – increased from 2013 to 2017. The growth was entirely in centers, as family child care capacity declined precipitously year-over-year, by a total of 25 percent over 5 years (consistent with a long-term downward trend). In the same period, capacity expanded at facilities accepting subsidies, however, infant capacity declined, reinforcing concerns about shortages in infant care capacity.

While subsidies generally meet or exceed median market rates in much of the region, there are noticeable shortcomings. Most notably, 2017 subsidy rates in Thurston County fail to meet market rates – both median and 75th percentile – for center-based and family child care infant, toddler, and preschool care. Subsidy rates fall short in other segments of family child care across the region, except in Pacific County where subsidies exceed market rates in all categories.

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council serves an economically-diverse 5-county region in SW Washington State. The region covers over 7,000 square miles from the southern Puget Sound to the Pacific Coast.

Findings

Finding 1. Wages drive a structural worker shortage in ECE industry

Participants' and informants' comments about wages, when combined with labor market economic theory, can be inferred to mean that wages are a central driving structural contributor to the workforce shortages reported in the ECE industry.

Finding 2. Tight labor markets, low wages, and challenging work contribute most to the lack of high quality, qualified candidates

Participants' and informants' comments about candidate qualifications and quality indicate a substantial strain on the current labor pool, and can be inferred as consequences of other labor market factors, including below equilibrium wages, the demanding nature of the work, and macro-economic conditions of low unemployment and high economic growth rates.

Finding 3. Research and administrative regulations place higher value on education credentials than do centers and FCCs

While there was widespread agreement that a diploma or ECE certificate is valuable, centers and FCCs based that importance on the fact that these credentials are required by law for certain positions, rather than necessitated by requirements of the work itself. [See analysis of Q2.1 and 2.3]

Finding 4. Lack of sufficient pathways to education credentials limit career growth

Both participants and informants feel the industry would benefit from more efficient pathways to college-level credits, certificates and degrees through credit for prior learning and experience, competency-based credentials, and apprenticeship. They believe that much of the continuing education and training workers have to take annually could count towards college credit, thus easing the path to attaining a degree or certificate. [See analysis of Q2.1 and 2.3]

Finding 5. Financial help and insufficient time hamper new hires and incumbent workers from certificate and degree attainment

Industry employers need financial support for continuing education and training of both new hires and incumbent workers. This could be in the form of subsidies (e.g., reduced cost offerings), scholarships, stipends to cover wages during training, and no/low-cost trainings. But they also need extended periods of time to achieve academic credentials: PDPs in Head Start have typically provided 3 years for a hire to gain required



The Child Care Action

Council was founded in 1987 by a group of parents, child care professionals, employers, school & government representatives, and other community members concerned about the inadequacies in our community's child care system.

CCAC serves Thurston, Grays Harbor, Mason, Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties.

Mission: To promote and nurture early learning communities where children and families thrive.

Vision: Communities where children are the focus and we all work together to assure that:

- Quality child care is accessible for all who need it;
- Professional development for child care providers results in high quality child care;
- Communities are engaged in supporting child care and early learning;
- Parent education is provided throughout communities.

credentials but new federal requirements shorten this to 2 years going forward;. The new WACs provide current members of the workforce up to 5 years to gain newly required credentials from August 1, 2019. [See analysis of Q2.4.)

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations address systems-level policy and market issues that require improvement in order for specific workforce development needs identified by this analysis to be fully met.

1. Compensation: Market-wide low wages, wage compression and a lack of employee benefits drive difficulties finding and retaining qualified workers.

Recommended actions:

- a. Leaders and analytic staff representing the state's workforce development system should continue and increase engagement in the state early childhood workforce compensation workgroup.
- b. Recommendations from the compensation workgroup's report, due to the Governor Inslee and the legislature December 1, 2018, should be evaluated by leaders of the region's and state's workforce development system and prioritized for legislative advocacy.
- c. The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council should assess the state compensation report findings for possible opportunities to pilot proposed solutions regionally.

"I had one [employee] for 10 years and she went on and got her degree and now she's a paraeducator, but we had her for 10 years. In the scheme of things, that's a long time in child care. She did her CDA and then she got her AA..."

– Thurston County participant

2. ECE Industry Delineation: The ECE industry in the Pacific Mountain region should be conceptualized as a birth-to-3rd grade field rather than what is often organized into two separate fields, birth-to-pre-K early childhood and K-12 education. A broader conception recognizes natural career pathways from ECE into K-3rd grade.

Recommended actions:



- a. Conduct a sector profile describing both the workforce and economic features of the ECE industry, inclusive of birth-to-3rd grade education and related services, for the Pacific Mountain region.
- b. Develop a systematic strategy to calibrate key entry points into the ECE industry in order to attract and retain more highly qualified workers. Calibrating entry points requires:
 - 1) better awareness of about how new workers enter the industry and, accordingly, recruiting at key transitions between school and work and between employers; and
 - 2) recognizing that ECE workers often find career progression by moving from one employer to another, including moving from private child care and Head Start/ECEAP to K-12 schools.

3. Flexible Industry-Specific Training Resources: Resources to fund customized and industry/employer-specific training are limited and, in some cases, relatively inflexible. Scholarship funding has been available for recent waves of professional development. However, compared to most other states, Washington has historically ranked poorly at supplying state support for employer- and industry-specific customized workforce training and development¹. New WAC requirements and the diverse, unique needs of local clusters of ECE employers will drive more need for customized training. Furthermore, while short-term grants and educational stipends may help meet certain training needs (e.g., offering site-specific classes for a short duration), but are inadequate in duration for the majority of incumbent ECE workers on professional development plans. These workers typically need 2-5 years to reach required credentials or degrees.

Recommended actions:

- a. The Pacific Mountain WDC should advocate for continued funding of Governor Inslee's Upskill-Backfill Workforce Development Initiative in order to help groups of ECE industry employers develop existing workers and backfill them with thoughtfully-identified newcomers, including those from populations historically facing barriers to employment whenever appropriate.
- b. The Pacific Mountain WDC should engage partners in the industry to identify and fund longer-term customized job skills (employer-

¹ Duscha, Steve and Wanda Lee Graves. (2006). *The Employer As Customer: State-Financed Customized Training*. US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.



specific) and incumbent worker training opportunities for ECE employers in the region.

4. Implementation of Newly Required Qualifications: The new child care licensing WACs will require workers gain credentials in ECE. It's unclear how well existing educational capacity will be able to meet demand for these credentials.

Recommended action:

- a. The Pacific Mountain WDC should work with regional ECE employers and continuing education organizations and state DCYF officials on the implementation of the new WACs, including opportunities to fund incumbent worker training.

5. Credit for Prior Learning and Competency-Based Credentials: DCYF is currently examining alternatives to holding college credits, including credit for prior learning and experience and equivalency processes. Similarly, Washington Childcare Centers Association (WCCA) has circulated an equivalencies proposal calling for alternatives methods for the workforce to meet new qualifications requirements set forth in WAC.

Recommended action:

- a. The Pacific Mountain WDC should monitor for policy recommendations and opportunities to support and pilot alternatives to traditional certificate and degree earning pathways for incumbent workers and those changing careers.

Specific Education and Training Recommendations

These recommendations, when taken in context with the strategic ones above, will support forward momentum in the ECE industry in the near term.

1. Convene one or more local ECE industry panels to collaborate on workforce development tactics and collaborative agreements among key partners:

- a. Seek funds to offset costs of both incumbent worker professional development and new hire basic qualifications, from sources including but not limited to Governor Inslee's Upskill-Backfill Initiative (or its successor from the governor's WIOA discretionary fund) and Washington's Job Skills and Customized Training Programs from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.



- b. Seek funds to underwrite the workforce training and development aspects of regional Head Start and ECEAP programs.
- c. Facilitate the execution of MOUs and provide or underwrite legal review of agreements and local match funding mechanisms; facilitate completion of local and inter-local articulation agreements.

2. Incumbent worker and new hire support to key ECE employers, with a focus on Sound to Harbor Early Learning:

Sound to Harbor Early Learning Programs has seventeen Head Start/ECEAP centers across a three county area of Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Mason counties, and operates the Early Learning Center at South Puget Sound Community College. As cited in this assessment, these programs are currently facing extreme workforce shortages in both the availability of qualified new hires and in the number of incumbent workers requiring further professional development and credentials in order to remain employed.

Pacific Mountain WDC should provide support for incumbent worker and new hire training for key ECE employers, with a particular focus on Sound to Harbor Early Learning's immediate needs.

3. Birth-to-3rd grade ECE industry entry points model:

The supply of prospective ECE workers needs to be primed for the demands of the work.

The Pacific Mountain WDC should pilot a birth-to-3rd grade ECE industry entry points model through new or expanded relationships with secondary programs like GRADS, Governor Inslee's Career-Connected Learning Initiative, career lattice events, and sponsorship of internship programs with local high schools so that new workers are effectively identified at key entry points and ready for the demands of the work upon hire.

4. Support expansion of ESD 113 Sound to Harbor's Parent U Program:

Sound to Harbor's Parent U is a free job training program offering classes and on-site training for parents of current and former students wanting to apply for teacher assistant and program substitute positions.

Participants take 42 hours classroom training in 2 hour increments and complete a 100 hour practicum. In the last program year, 6 out of 11 participants were hired into Sound to Harbor Early Learning programs. Program officials indicated this model has great potential for scaling. A similar initiative, Community U, engaging WorkFirst participants in early



learning pathways, has also been piloted at Sound to Harbor. Further work is needed to determine if and how Community U can borrow from successful elements of Parent U.

The Pacific Mountain WDC should support expansion of ESD 113 Sound to Harbor's Parent U Program and consider supporting continued testing and evaluation of their Community U Program.



Purpose and Procedure

Purpose

Recognizing the critical contributions made by the early childhood education industry (ECE industry) to the region's economy, the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (PacMtn) funded this industry needs assessment in order to better understand the current conditions of hiring and retaining staff in the ECE industry and its future workforce development needs.

To understand current conditions and assess industry needs, the Child Care Action Council (CCAC) engaged an array of early learning employers, directors, and workers through focus groups and interviews to understand their experiences with hiring, retention, professional development and accessing relevant education and training resources.

This report identifies the workforce development issues and experiences most frequently cited by early childhood educators, including center directors, family child care owners, and those who are self-employed. We begin with a short look at key trends and factors influencing the market for ECE in the region. We then present, in detail, observations from focus groups and interviews conducted across the PacMtn region. Key findings and recommendations about how the region could proceed to meet the identified needs are offered at both strategic and tactical levels.

Procedure

This is local qualitative research, primarily informed by comments gathered in focus groups and key informant interviews. Industry trends and indicators gathered from published sources provide secondary context to the current condition of the industry and factors that influence its condition.

Team

The research team consisted of a lead analyst, co-analyst, director, and transcriptionist. The lead analyst was present at all focus groups and key informant interviews. The other team members were present at the majority of groups and interviews, with minor variation based on schedules and availability. The transcriptionist was present at all focus groups and none of the interviews.



What is qualitative research?

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive.

– *Qualitative Research Consultants Association*

Informants

Between May and August, 2018, CCAC conducted 8 focus groups across the region:

1. Thurston County (north) – Child care center directors
2. Thurston County (south) – Child care center directors
3. Thurston County – License-exempt preschools and private nannies
4. Mason County – Family child care owners
5. Grays Harbor County – Child care center directors
6. Grays Harbor County – Family child care owners
7. Lewis County – Child care center directors
8. Pacific County – Head Start licensed center director and family child care

During the same period, CCAC conducted 5 interviews with key informants from the region's lead organizations for Head Start, Early Head Start, and the state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Using key informant interviews was especially crucial in gathering facts about school district and educational service district level practices in how early learning classrooms are structured and staffed. These more centralized programs tend to have a single hiring authority when compared to the decentralized nature of independently-operated child care centers, family child care, license-exempt preschools and nannies.

1. Thurston and Mason Counties – ESD 113: Head Start, ECEAP, and Child Care
2. Grays Harbor County – Aberdeen School District: ECEAP blended with Special Education Preschool
3. Lewis County – Centralia College: ECEAP and Children's Lab
4. Lewis County – Head Start
5. Pacific County – South Bend School District: ECEAP, ESIT (Early Support for Infants & Toddlers), Child Care

Instrument

We applied a common set of foundational questions to all groups and interviewees. The full set of questions is available in Appendix C.

Questions were sorted into 2 thematic sequences:

1. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention



How the data are analyzed

When analyzing focus group and interview transcripts and notes, we applied 5 analytic themes helpful in describing qualitative observations:

Frequency: How often was a concept mentioned?

Extensiveness: How many different people mentioned the concept?

Intensity: How much passion or force was behind the comments?

Specificity: How much detail was provided by respondents?

Internal consistency: Did individual participants remain consistent in their views?

Participant perception of importance: Did participants cite this as an important concept?

-- Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, from *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research Fifth Edition*

2. Professional Development and Training

Questions were adjusted in certain instances for 2 reasons: First, to account for any refinements necessary to set a question in the context of the group's or interviewee's unique situation. For example, several questions were refined in order to couch them logically to nannies, who are positioned differently in the ECE industry than others. Second, ad hoc adjustments to foundational questions and the addition of follow-up questions were made in order to follow the flow of discussion and elicit elaboration where the moderator deemed necessary.

In the interest of time management and focusing our analytic resources, a co-moderator took contemporaneous notes during each group with an eye on tallying the number of participants in agreement with certain statements. When a statement was made by one participant, we asked others to signal with a thumbs up gesture if they agreed with that statement based on their own experiences. These tallies are compiled into summary observations from each focus group and also consolidated into a set of observations, located in Appendices D and E.

Analysis

Our analysis of focus group and interview findings was sequential and continuous. Sequences for focus groups proceeded as follows:

1. A co-moderator took notes during each focus group, tallying the number of participants in agreement with certain statements.
2. The full discussion was transcribed by a professional transcriptionist who had attended the focus group in-person.
3. The co-moderator typed up notes and tally counts in the days following each focus group, turning to transcriptions to check for accuracy.
4. The moderator then reviewed tallied observations and checked transcriptions and their own notes to spot check the record.
5. Co-moderators periodically debriefed key observations and progress of qualitative data gathering and made adjustments in moderation approach and notes processing accordingly.

Key informant interviews were conducted by phone except in 1 case where it was in person. A co-moderator participated in the first 3 interviews; the last 2 were conducted by a single moderator. Detailed notes were taken during each interview. Interviews were scheduled across the same 3.5 months as focus groups in order to benefit from the sequential and continuous nature of focus group scheduling.



ECE Workforce Data Challenges

The ECE industry has a long-decried and documented data gap. The issues underlying the data gap are numerous, complex; yet two substantial factors drive the challenges:

1. Lack of a comprehensive data system: Labor market and other descriptive data about establishments, employment, and wages are derived incompletely from a number of data sources, many of them survey-based, that aren't directly comparable and not consistently generalizable to the industry as a whole.
2. Informal care arrangements and self-employment inadequately captured: Labor market data don't adequately capture informal, both paid and unpaid) child care arrangements, such as those from family members, friends, shared care and au pairs and nannies. It also tends to undercount self-employment by operators of licensed FCCs.

See the following for a detailed discussion about the ECE workforce data gap: Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2012. *The early childhood care and education workforce: Challenges and opportunities*

The continuous nature of this analysis is that we reflected on key observations and commonalities across groups in the course of conducting focus groups and interviews over a 3.5 month period. This provided an opportunity to refine, delve deeper, and test our findings over time.

Documentation

Summary observations from each focus group and a consolidated set of observations from interviews are located in Appendices D and E at the conclusion of this report. Abridged transcripts of each focus group and interview were made available to the grant funder outside of this report in order to preserve the privacy of participants and interviewees.

“Participants” and “Informants”

Focus group participants are commonly identified as “participants” and were primarily comprised of child care center directors/operators and family child care owners/operators. Nannies and license-exempt preschools are also referred to as “participants.” Key informants who were interviewed outside of focus groups are identified as “informants.” Where agreement was shared across both participants and informants, observations are presented as such with notation about the degree of frequency, extensiveness and/or intensity agreement was shared. In other cases, where experiences clearly differed between participants and informants, we indicate so and describe differences.



What is qualitative research?

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive.

– *Qualitative Research Consultants Association*

Pacific Mountain's ECE Industry: Key Facts and Information Sources



Any workforce needs assessment is helped when prefaced with key facts and indicators about the subject industry. This section seeks to provide basic descriptive facts about the ECE workforce and industry in the Pacific Mountain region. However, we limited the scope of this section because of both a fundamental dearth of data about this industry's workforce and the complexities of the data sets necessary to develop a comprehensive industry or workforce profile. We instead present a few key facts and information sources, before turning our full attention to locally-gathered, qualitative observations about current hiring and development needs.

Population Trends Influencing the Market for ECE Services

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Avg annual growth rate
Pacific Mountain Age 0-4	27,933	27,817	27,851	28,174	28,602	0.5%
Pacific Mountain Age 5-9	29,155	29,493	29,688	30,073	30,252	0.7%
Pacific Mountain Total population, All ages	492,300	496,700	500,590	505,900	511,750	0.8%
WA Statewide Age 0-4	435,418	436,847	440,342	447,560	454,134	0.8%
WA Statewide Age 5-9	441,499	447,727	453,190	460,236	465,666	1.1%
WA Statewide Total population, All ages	6,882,400	6,968,170	7,061,410	7,183,700	7,310,300	1.2%

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

Home to 511,750 residents, including nearly 59,000 children ages birth to 9, the Pacific Mountain region represents about 7 percent of Washington's total population. Over the past 5 years the region's annual population growth, of both young children and the population as a whole, lags a bit behind the state rate yet remains on a positive trend.

The region generally tracks with the state's average rate of 59.1 percent children under age 6 whose custodial parents are in the workforce, give or take a low of 54.2 percent in Pacific County and a high of 70.7 percent in Grays Harbor (Table 2).

Pacific Mountain Counties	2012-2016	Margin of Error
Grays Harbor	70.7%	+/-5.4%
Lewis	60.6%	+/-4.8%
Mason	56.2%	+/-8.8%
Pacific	54.2%	+/-10%
Thurston	57.5%	+/-4.1%
Washington Statewide	59.1%	+/-0.6%

Source: The U.S. Census Bureau's American Fact Finder, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

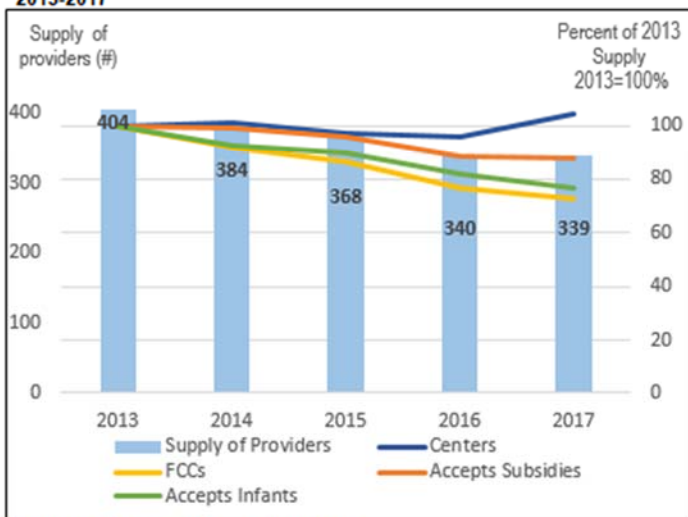
Licensed Providers and Capacity

There are fewer licensed child care providers in the Pacific Mountain region today than there were 5 years ago. As of 2017, the Pacific Mountain region was home to an estimated 339 licensed child care facilities, including both licensed centers and licensed FCCs. Tracking with a downward trend statewide in the aggregate number of facilities, Pacific Mountain had 16 percent fewer licensed facilities in 2017 than it had in 2013. The decline statewide for this same period was about 10 percent. When we look at this trend in more detail, as pictured in Figure 1, we can see that all types of licensed facilities were declining over the 5 year period, with the exception of centers, which after a decline bounced back to make some gains in 2016 and 2017. Appendix B. provides detailed licensed provider and capacity trends for the region and state from 2013 to 2017.

There's pronounced consolidation in the private segment of the ECE industry. When we turn to look at child care capacity in licensed centers and FCCs, we see a more complete picture: While the number of facilities have declined, the supply of enrollment slots, that is –capacity – increased from 2013 to 2017, as depicted in Figure 2. That is, by 2017 there were fewer facilities with more enrollment slots. The expansion of child care capacity wasn't steady over that period; in fact, it hung at about 98 percent of 2013 levels for 3 years before ticking up to 103 percent by 2017. The growth was entirely in centers, as FCC capacity declined precipitously year-over-year, by a total of 25 percent over 5 years. In the same period, capacity expanded at facilities accepting

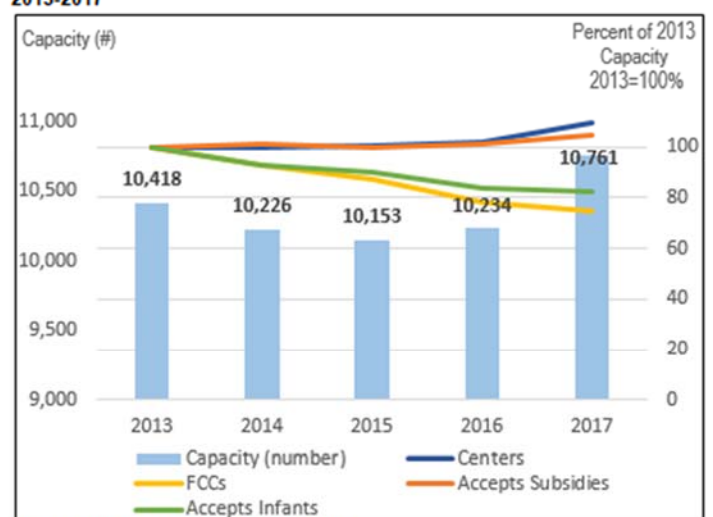


Figure 1. Licensed Provider Supply Trends, Pacific Mountain Region, 2013-2017



Source: Child Care Aware of Washington

Figure 2. Licensed Child Care Capacity Trends, Pacific Mountain Region, 2013-2017



Source: Child Care Aware of Washington

subsidies, however, infant capacity declined, reinforcing concerns about shortages in infant care capacity.

Current Market and Subsidy Rates

Any attempt to compare market rates for child care to subsidies is complex and requires analysis outside of the scope of this assessment. Yet, such comparisons provide valuable background context to the observations and findings of this work. Thus, we provide summary data about market and subsidy rates for each of Pacific Mountain’s counties in Appendix B.

While subsidies generally meet or exceed median market rates in much of the region, there are noticeable shortcomings. Most notably, 2017 subsidy rates in Thurston County fail to meet market rates – both median and 75th percentile – for center-based and FCC infant, toddler, and preschool care. Subsidy rates fall short in other segments of FCCs across the region, except in Pacific County where subsidies exceed market rates in all categories.

Wages

The Employment Security Department’s occupational wages estimates, while incomplete because they don’t include self-employed family child care and some other elements of the ECE workforce, show that workers in these occupations face fairly narrow wage bands (that is, there’s a small range between those earning the 25th percentile and those at the 75th percentile). Table 3 illustrates that both child care workers and preschool teachers earn a median of just over \$11 per hour in Thurston County, right about the current minimum wage. The same occupations earn slightly more elsewhere in Southwest Washington.



Child Care Market Rate Study

Further research into the dynamics between ECE workforce supply and development and market and subsidy rates should begin with Washington’s 2018 Child Care Market Rate Survey Findings, available from the Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families at: https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/2018_Washington_State_Market_Rate_Survey.pdf

Table 3. Occupational Wages, Child Care and Early Learning Occupations, Olympia MSA and SW Washington, 2017

Location	Occupation	Average Hourly Wage	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile	Annual Wage
Olympia/Tumwater MSA (Thurston County)	Child Care Worker	\$11.25	\$10.55	\$11.19	\$11.83	\$23,388
	Preschool Teachers/ Except Special Education	\$11.63	\$10.21	\$11.11	\$12.02	\$24,182
	Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program	\$17.54	\$14.45	\$16.78	\$18.75	\$36,480
SW Washington (balance of Pacific Mountain WDA plus Wahkiakum County)	Child Care Worker	\$12.37	\$10.94	\$11.86	\$13.53	\$25,720
	Preschool Teachers/ Except Special Education	\$13.66	\$11.07	\$12.62	\$15.60	\$28,425
	Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program	\$21.81	\$16.51	\$19.35	\$27.72	\$45,348

Source: Washington Employment Security Department, 2017 OES Databook

Employment Forecasts and Openings Due to Turnover

Occupational employment estimates from Washington's employment security department capture a large, but incomplete, segment of the region's ECE workforce. Not represented in employment estimates are any self-employed ECE positions, including FCC owners, unpaid family, friends and neighbors, and any other workers engaged outside of the state unemployment insurance system.

What we see in the region is a group of occupations that are expected to outpace the growth rate of all occupations through 2021 before slowing their rates of growth, but still growing, from 2021-2026 (Table 4).



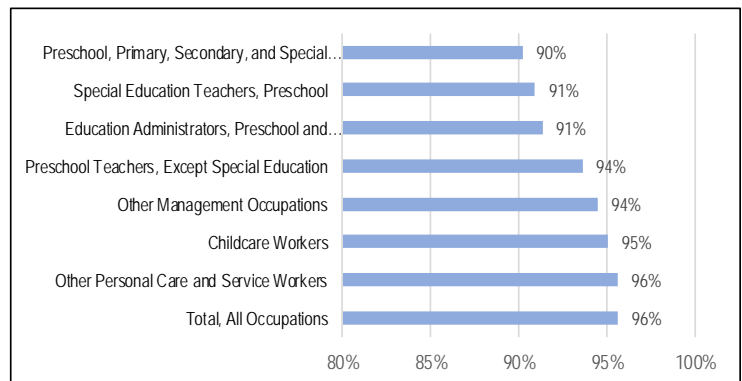
Table 4. Occupational Employment Projections, Child Care and Early Learning Occupations, Pacific Mountain Region, 2021-2026

SOC code	Occupational title	Estimated employment 2016	Estimated employment 2021	Estimated employment 2026	Average annual growth rate 2016-2021	Average annual growth rate 2021-2026	Average annual opening due to growth 2016-2021	Average annual opening due to growth 2021-2026	Average annual total opening 2016-2021	Average annual total opening 2021-2026
11-9031	Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare	53	61	64	2.85%	0.96%	2	1	23	24
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	423	481	504	2.60%	0.94%	12	5	187	195
25-2051	Special Education Teachers, Preschool	87	97	105	2.20%	1.60%	2	2	22	24
39-9011	Childcare Workers	1,338	1,487	1,551	2.13%	0.85%	30	13	604	630
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	207,035	223,258	233,774	1.52%	0.92%	3,230	2,081	73,296	76,560

Source: Washington Employment Security Department

These occupational employment projections offer the added detail of estimating annual job openings attributable to growth (the creation of new jobs) compared to total openings. The difference between openings due to growth and total openings is turnover. Specifically, these projections estimate annual job openings due to individuals leaving a given occupation for employment in another. (It's important to understand that turnover by these estimates does *not* represent people who change employer while remaining in the same occupation). Figure 3 illustrates that forecasted annual ECE openings due to turnover differ very little from those in related occupational groups and the rate for all occupations combined.

Figure 3. Annual percentage of job openings due to occupational turnover - people leave a given occupation for a different one, key ECE occupations compared to non-ECE, Pacific Mountain Region, 2016-2021



Source: Author's calculation from Washington Employment Security Department, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections.

Observations

In this section, we'll proceed sequentially through questions as they were asked of both focus groups and interviewees. We summarize findings that speak directly to the purpose of this assessment: To understand current industry conditions and assess workforce development needs. We seek to identify patterns and themes that, when taken together and in the context of overarching trends in the industry, create a point-in-time understanding of workforce development needs of the ECE industry in the PacMtn region.

Part 1. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention

1.1. What qualifications are you seeking in candidates?

"I'm looking for people who can be strong and think fast on their feet and that really have a passion. Those people are often hard to find because a lot of people think it's easy babysitting and then they realize it's not."

– Thurston County participant

Appendix A details the education, experience, and training requirements for the most commonly-employed, direct-service positions in the ECE industry. Given that the minimum requirements are specified in state or federal policy, this question, then, seeks to explore the qualifications cited by those hiring ECE providers. At times, respondents co-mingled the qualifications they desire in candidates with those required by law. We don't attempt to untangle those here. Rather, we seek to note the patterns and themes expressed by participants when asked about the qualifications they're seeking in candidates.



Be Cautious With Numbers

We pay attention to frequency, but we are cautious about counting, and we rarely include numbers in reports. Numbers can be misleading in focus group reports. Readers often want to turn numbers into percentages and then project to the population. This is unwise. The sample size is too small. Not everyone answers every question. Some people may comment three times on one issue. Other people may not comment at all. Instead, we encourage the use of modifiers like *no one*, *a few*, *some*, *many*, *most*, or *all* to describe how many people talked about an issue in a particular way.

-- Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, from [Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research Fifth Edition](#)

Positions most commonly hired by Head Start and ECEAP	Qualifications sought by Head Start and ECEAP, noted for 5 different programs in the region
Lead Teacher	<p>Site A. BA in ECE or related and 1+ years' experience</p> <p>Site B. AA in ECE (at least 30 credits); BA in ECE preferred</p> <p>Site C. BA in ECE or related preferred</p> <p>Site D. Certificated teachers with ECE or special ed (NOTE: Program d. is blended ECEAP and Special Education, therefore must have certificated teachers)</p> <p>Site E. AA with ECE credits</p>
Assistant Teacher	<p>Site A. <i>not specified for this position</i></p> <p>Site B. AA in ECE preferred; CDA +2 years preschool experience accepted; HS diploma plus some preschool experience and desire to gain credentials on plan accepted.</p> <p>Site C. AA in ECE preferred; 12 credit certificate accepted.</p> <p>Site D. AA degree or pass a paraprofessional test. If new hire lacks 12 ECE credits, have 5 years to earn 12 credits.</p> <p>Site E. 12 credit ECE certificate.</p>
Program Coordinator	Site C. BA in human development or related preferred; AA in human development or related field accepted; 30 credits in related field if willing to get on development plan.
Center Support Aid/Center Assistant	<p>Site A. AA in ECE or related and experience preferred</p> <p>Site B. First Aid/CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens, Food Handlers Permit</p>
Positions most commonly hired by centers	Qualifications most commonly sought by centers
Lead Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A passion for work with children; ability to work with children • Experience working with children; 2-3 years' experience • Willingness to continue education; make progress on professional development plan • College degree or ECE certificate • Trustworthy, reliable, adaptable, patient, mature, good under pressure
Assistant Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills; good with children; able to support lead teacher • Compassion for children; good with children • Willingness to learn; willingness to become a lead teacher • Associate's Degree; Initial or short certificate
Positions most commonly hired by FCCs	Qualifications most commonly sought by FCCS
Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background check • Experience with children (informal experience like coming from a large family okay) • Good fit with center, staff, kids and parents (personal qualities, temperament, relationships) • Reliable, trustworthy
Nannies and License-Exempt Preschools	Self-reported qualifications most commonly sought in nannies and preschools
Nannies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience with children • Good fit to family (personal qualities, temperament, relationships) • First aid/CPR
Preschool assistant teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive interactions with children observed • Experience working in ECE field • First aid/CPR
Preschool Director/Owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility safety standards • Experience with children • Teacher's responsiveness to parents' goals for children

1.2. Are you finding you are able to hire high quality staff?

All but one Head Start and ECEAP programs described an inability to find and hire high quality staff. Most centers and FCCs also find they are unable to hire high quality staff. The majority of participants and informants expressed intensity about this experience –that is, they are frustrated, worried, concerned, or tired by this experience.

“I find that the pool of staff I’m hiring more recently in the last year or so, is declining and I’m not exactly sure why. I kind of attribute it to the raise in minimum wage...what we’re offering for starting is the same as what they’re going to make at an easier or less stressful position.”

– Thurston County participant

The largest Head Start program said their sites are in crisis mode because they’re not able to find qualified employees. Two other Head Start/ECEAP programs characterized their situation as significantly understaffed. A licensed Head Start provider in Pacific County described their inability to find a qualified site director: The situation became so dire that the Educational Service District, which oversees Head Start sites in a multicounty region, had to send their own employee from 110 miles away to serve as director for several months. The director they expect to hire shortly is a good fit but, technically, not qualified according to state requirements; a professional development plan will need to be made.

Issues about their hiring concerns are examined in more detail in question 1.4, which looks more broadly at staffing challenges.

1.3. What is your experience with turnover of staff? Follow up: Would you say this is a large concern?

All but one of the Head start/ECEAP programs said turnover is a large concern. One program that operates a large number of sites reports a 50% turnover for last year, where in the past it typically ran around 23-25%. A smaller school district-based program reported that last year 6 of their 8 teachers were new. An even smaller rural site reported a 50% teacher turnover rate from last year.



This needs assessment includes perspectives from a variety of types of early childhood education professionals and programs:

Centers: Licensed child care centers

FCCs: Licensed in-home family care providers

Head Start: Early learning program for children 3-5 (or birth to 3 for Early Head Start). Federally funded.

ECEAP: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program free for 3-4 year olds. State funded.

Blended Programs: Child care facility that offers ECEAP of Head Start slots.

License-Exempt Preschools: Program lengths of no more than 4 hours per day.

Nannies: Provides child care for a family.

They report that retention has been especially problematic in the last 2 years, observing that the Department of Early Learning (now the Department of Children, Youth and Families –DCYF), Early Achievers implementation and ECEAP expansion are responsible for diverting some of the most qualified workers away from them. School districts were also cited as common destinations of staff who leave.



“I’m sick to my stomach when I have to find a new employee.”

– Mason County participant

Many centers and FCCs reported having experience with staff turnover and most of those feel that it’s a large concern. There were some holdouts, however. For instance, a few reported long term employees of 4-20 years. Longer term employees tended to be lead teachers rather than assistant teachers.

Nannies reported that they stay with a single job (one family) for 1 to 3 years on average, and that siblings coming into care often elongate the employment term. License-exempt preschools agreed that they often serve families with siblings over several years.

1.3.1. What causes staff to stay?

Even where participants and informants cited turnover as a significant concern, there were examples of much praised, loyal employees who were employed for long periods. On the downside, a couple of providers casually remarked that marginal employees know they won’t get fired because there’s no one to replace them.

Most cited reasons staff stay at centers, FCCs and Head Start/ECEAP programs:
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- | |
|---|
| 1. Enjoy the job/love the work/passion for children |
| 2. Feel supported, appreciated/good working atmosphere |
| 3. Flexibility of hours/workload/time for their own family life |

“If you treat them right, they’re going to treat you right. You have to show them your appreciation...We would all love to pay them way more than we can.”

– Thurston County participant

Nannies and license-exempt preschool operators, likewise, all noted their relationships with children are what keep them in the line of work. They also like the flexibility of child care work arrangements. But after that, their commonalities with centers and FCCs end. They uniquely cite good wages and getting their own needs and interests met as major drivers for remaining in the industry.



Most cited reasons nannies and license-exempt preschools give for staying:
1. The children
2. Get own needs and interests met by sharing music, food, relationships, nature, movement, etc. with children
3. Good wages
4. Flexible work arrangements

1.3.2. What reasons do staff give for leaving?

Participants and informants provided detailed accounts of reasons why staff leave. Poor wages and burnout were the leading reasons cited for staff leaving voluntarily. Other reasons mentioned by many participants related to compensation, career pathways, life circumstances, and a poor match between worker and nature of the work. In Head Start and ECEAP, public schools and social services agencies are a strong draw for workers who achieve a degree or teaching certification. Compensation, benefits and work conditions are more favorable there.

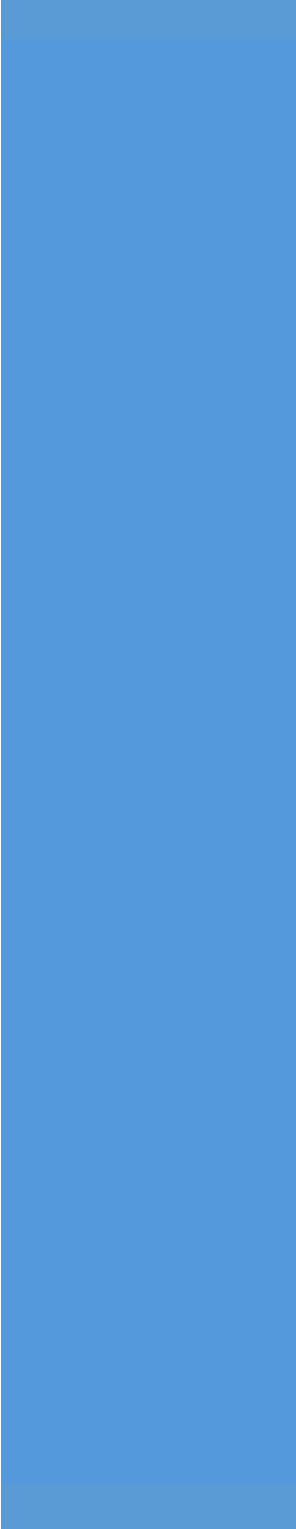
“If I wanted to make an actual living wage, I’d go back to teaching.”

– Pacific County participant

A few participants shared accounts of staff being fired. The primary causes for terminations in those cases were poor performance with children and unreliability (e.g., tardiness, inattention to responsibilities, unsafe or inappropriate interactions with children, co-workers and/or parents).

Most cited reasons staff leave:
1. Poor wages/compensation
2. Burnout/stress
3. Pursing higher levels of education
4. Progressing into K-12 education sector
5. Life circumstances/family needs conflict with employment situation
6. Lack of employee benefits (non-wage)
7. Lack of passion for ECE/do not enjoy working with children

Nannies and license-exempt preschools strongly resonated with the perceived lack of professional recognition (“career legitimacy”) as a reason for potentially leaving the ECE industry. Three participants are actively in the process of transitioning to careers in counseling, nursing, and library sciences after a first career as nannies.



Most cited reasons nannies and license-exempt preschools cite for potentially leaving the industry:
1. Emotionally-draining work
2. Lack of employee benefits and workplace protections
3. Career change into a field with more “career legitimacy”

Knowing there’s a downward trend in the number of licensed FCC providers across the state and in the PacMtn region, we inquired about FCC owner/operators’ reasons for staying in business and what might cause them to leave the business. One participant had recently closed in order to continue on her planned educational path into K-12 special education. Another, when discussing her reasons for staying in business, opined on what else she could do “at this age if I start over?” FCCs in Pacific County discussed the feeling that licensors want them to align more with child care center practices; they felt strongly that doing so, even incrementally, would take away the homey feeling they so wish for the children in their care to experience.

Most cited reasons FCC owner/operators cite for staying in business:
1. The children
2. Caring for families: parents, second generation of kids.
Most cited reasons FCC owner/operators give for contemplating leaving the business:
1. Retirement
2. State licensing and quality improvement requirements
3. Medical issues
4. Difficult working conditions: Long hours, cannot leave the site, can’t call in sick; stress; liability.

1.4. What staffing challenges, if any, are you facing?

This question elicited extensive and intense commentary from participants and informants. Over the course of focus groups and interviews it became a catchall moment when all the issues with regards to hiring and retaining staff came up. With that in mind, we set out to surface the most commonly identified staffing challenges and scan for themes and patterns therein.

Respondent Type	Most commonly cited hiring and retention challenges
Head Start and ECEAP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tight labor market – everyone understaffed and competing for same talent 2. Turnover causing excessive staff onboarding/training demands, inability to meet enrollment targets, and staff burnout 3. Wages aren't commensurate with education requirements/unable to raise wage once education achieved 4. ECEAP expansion further stressing the workforce situation 5. School districts/K-12 and special education programs draw workers away from Head Start/ECEAP
Centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unable to pay living wages 2. High staff turnover rates 3. Unable to find high quality/qualified employees 4. Who will work for minimum wage with additional education/training requirements? 5. ECE is a stepping stone to school district jobs that pay more
FCCs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wages are too low 2. Unable to find high quality/qualified employees 3. Can't afford to hire and pay an assistant without raising rates charged to client families
Nannies & License-Exempt Preschools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wages are too low² 2. Difficult to find positions with enough hours



“To take the time to [get ECE certificates], you can work at McDonald’s...for \$11.50 an hour, and that’s all we can afford to pay them. However, I do believe in education and that the education does make them a better teacher.”

–Thurston County participant

Because of the robust comments elicited by this question, we’ll delve more deeply into the top-cited issues.

Wages too low to attract and retain qualified, high quality employees:

The issue of wages being too low to attract and retain qualified, high quality employees hit every dimension that we scanned for when analyzing focus group and interview observations:

- Frequency – wages mentioned at high frequencies throughout focus groups and interviews;
- Extensiveness – many different people mention wages;

² Although the majority indicated wages were good, this was the most common answer among the few who expressed a challenge.

- Intensity – people expressed passion and force when talking about wages;
- Specificity – wage issues were described in detail;
- Internal consistency – participant views about wages remained consistent throughout focus groups; and
- Participant perception of importance – participants cited wages as an important concept with regards to the industry’s workforce development needs.

While certainly wrought with complexity, we observed the wage issue described in four basic ways:

First, wages are too low to justify the additional education and/or training requirements that most ECE workers must pursue in order to stay employed. Related, participants speculated that prospective workers who already have college degrees aren’t attracted to low wage positions. Informants confirmed this.

Second, wages are too low to compensate for the hard working conditions faced by most ECE workers when alternative employment opportunities exist.

Third, wages aren’t keeping pace with the cost of living, even in some lower-cost rural areas. Housing costs and student loans were cited by a few participants as problematic costs faced by prospective workers in their communities.

And fourth, providers (both private and public) haven’t the revenue to pay for qualified, high quality workers, nor to pay for development plans to help the large number of incumbent workers in ECEAP/Head Start programs reach minimum credential requirements (certificates and degrees).

Washington’s voter-passed minimum wage law (2016) was occasionally identified by participants as a contributing factor to their wage predicaments. In particular, those participants described the phenomena of wage compression – where an increasing minimum wage compresses the pay scale such that new hire and more junior worker pay is relatively close to more senior, experienced employees and even center directors. At the same time, paying an increased minimum wage was reported by a few to hurt business because they have to raise rates charged to private pay families. A few participants also commented that state child care



Minimum wage requirements

2018 minimum wage: \$11.50 per hour. The first increase under the new law raised minimum wage from \$9.47 to \$11.00 per hour in January 2017. The minimum wage applies to all jobs, including agriculture.

Employers must pay employees age 16 and older at least \$11.50 per hour in 2018. Employers are allowed to pay 85 percent of the minimum wage to employees under age 16. For 2018, this rate is \$9.78 per hour.

The minimum wage will increase annually over the next few years: \$12 in 2019 and \$13.50 in 2020. Starting Jan. 1, 2021, minimum wage increases will be calculated by L&I using a formula tied to the rate of inflation.

Excerpted and adapted from: Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

subsidy rates are not keeping up with costs, including labor costs associated with minimum wage increases.

For instance, FCCs in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties said they'd benefit from having an assistant – they have the physical space to grow and waitlists or confidence that client families would enroll if more space were available. However, they can't afford to hire staff at the new minimum wage without raising rates on families who are already cash strapped and have few other choices for child care. Providers in Pacific County were particularly aware of long waitlists and unmet needs.

"I have a lot of space, I just don't have the funds to bring anybody else on."

– Pacific County participant

Informants from Head Start/ECEAP programs, on the other hand, infrequently mentioned minimum wage increases in their comments about wage dynamics. More frequently, they pointed to their own program's (or lead agency's) compressed salary schedules and practices of maintaining a certain number of workers at part time (at community-college based programs) as the major limiting factors in their wage struggles.

The low wage issue was reported to be compounded by centers and some ECEAP and Head Start sites cutting worker hours in order to save money. A few participants reported that, while some workers enjoy shorter work days or weeks, others couldn't earn enough to sustain employment with workplaces where hours were cut. Paradoxically, while nannies celebrated their ability to earn wages that well exceeded those offered in center classrooms, low wages were also their most frequently cited employment issue. Likewise, nannies love the scheduling flexibility inherent in working for a private family, but also raised the issue that they struggle to find positions that offer enough hours to yield livable incomes.

A lack of high quality/qualified employees:

Many participants and informants commented that they've seen a decline in the quality of the labor pool. Some commented that this could be because the economy is doing so well; there is a lot of competition for



Provider Minimum Wage Impact Study

In January 2017 DEL surveyed child care centers and family homes on the impact of Initiative 1433 ("I-1433") raising Washington's minimum wage. The data collected indicates that providers were broadly impacted by the initiative.

Family Home Providers: For family homes, 46% reported that they had paid assistants, and the average pay increase among these was 12%. The survey data suggests a total impact on family home providers of \$.39 per child per day, or approximately 1%.¹

Child Care Centers: For centers, wages were reported to increase for lead teachers by 5.2% and for assistant teachers by 8.5%, statewide. These increases suggest a total business impact regionally of 2.3%-6.4%. Using the survey data along with statewide unemployment insurance data, we estimate a statewide business impact for centers of 3.5%.

Excerpted and adapted from: Washington Department of Early Learning, https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/Subsidy/Centers_Homes_Min_Wage_Impact_Survey_Analysis_2017.pdf

skilled workers, even those with just good soft skills and no credentials.³ Coffee stands and fast food outlets are frequently referred to as the major competition on the entry level side. Participants in rural areas feel that it's especially hard to find quality workers because of their remote locations.

Basic workplace reliability seems lacking to many participants. For instance, a few noted that candidates no-show to interviews they've scheduled or stop showing up to work after a few weeks, with no explanation. They say it's hard to get people with a work ethic who sincerely enjoy working with children. They find that more youthful candidates lack initiative to notice and do what needs to be done, aren't motivated to work hard, and spend a surprising amount of time looking at their smart phones.

Several participants say it's hard to find candidates with practical classroom experience with children; teachers who may enjoy children struggle in the classroom environment and leave when they realize child care is not an easy job. A couple commented that classroom-based education [at universities and colleges] is insufficient preparation for the practicalities of classroom management. Providers use working interviews and probationary periods to assess candidates. Two informants mentioned a mismatch in worker expectations or "values" and program policies that prohibit expulsion from Head Start.

The region's largest Head Start program, Sound to Harbor Early Learning Programs, detailed the depth of their situation with the following figures:

Out of 132 classroom current staff:

- Teachers: 44 are fully qualified; 15 need a professional development plan (PDP) or are in training
- Teacher Assistant/BAFTA: 22 are fully qualified; 39 need PDP/training
- Center Support Aid – 12 are fully qualified (need a HS diploma only)

³ At the time of this writing, both Washington and the US have achieved "full employment" with unemployment rates at 4.7% and 4.0% respectively. A labor market is considered at "full employment" when the unemployment rate is below 5%. Unemployment rates in PacMtn, aside from Thurston County, tend to run higher than the state rate. They currently range from a low of 4.7% in Thurston County to 6.4 in Pacific County.



The consequences are stark:

- Of 80 classrooms last school year, there were 28 staff vacancies that caused 110 eligible children to not be served.

Looking across their entire service area at the challenge ahead, Sound to Harbor Early Learning administrators provided the following context to the scale of their capacity challenges:

"The ESD is not going to be able to reach the mandate for enrollments because of staffing.

[We are] currently serving 925 3-4 year olds and [there are] another 1000 [eligible but] not being served.

For early head start, 0-3, another 3000 who would be likely eligible not being served."

Other challenges

Other participant statements about hiring and retention challenges where there was a moderate-to-high degree of agreement included:

- It's challenging to get people to apply to open positions and/or show up to interviews.
- It's challenging to get teachers to talk with the children rather than one another.
- Cannot provide benefits.
- It's challenging to find new employees in time when someone gives 2 weeks' notice,
- It's difficult to maintain participation in Early Achievers (EA, the state's quality improvement rating system) when staff turnover is high because staff develop specific KSAs through coaching and practice. When those staff leave, centers/FCCs have to start over with new employees, while their ratings timeline draws closer.
- It's difficult to hire "marginal" but necessary positions such as: floaters, closing shift, summers, substitutes/back-up workers
- Hiring and retention have become especially difficult in the past 2 years; respondents speculated this is because Early Achievers



coaching and administration and ECEAP classroom growth is drawing from the child care labor pool.

“When we started, we did have vacations and sick leave. We had to cut it out...because we just could no longer afford it. We had an IRA, too, and we just can’t now.”

–Thurston County participant

1.5. Have you talked with others who hold positions similar to yours? If so, what can you share about their experiences in hiring and retaining staff?

This question was asked when time permitted. When asked, respondents and informants said they do hear similar hiring and retention issues from their peers both in the region and in other areas of Washington.

1.6. In a perfect world, what would it take to have high quality staff who stay in their jobs?

Among both participants and informants, there was nearly total agreement that higher wages and opportunities for wage progression are required to attract and keep high quality staff. Exceptions were FCC providers in Pacific County, where they presented their need in terms of a lower minimum wage in order to hire assistants and expand enrollment. Many participants from centers and FCCs also agreed that employee benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid vacation and holiday leave would help.

Related, many participants said they need help paying employee wages while the employees are in training. They believe this would enable employees to take necessary training and, potentially, incentivize them to seek additional increments of education.

Underlying the wage comments, many participants cited the need for higher revenues in order to keep up with labor costs and regulations. A few pointed to the need for DSHS subsidy rates to keep pace with costs. A smaller number of others said they wished to be able to raise private pay rates without the fear of losing families (customers). Some explained that if increased reimbursement rates enabled them to lower teacher-to-child ratios, then staff burnout and the resulting turnover may improve.



Informants from Head Start and ECEAP highlighted that, in addition to better compensation, a positive and supportive workplace environment is critical. Within these comments they called for more support from coaches and specialists.



Part 2. Professional Development and Training

2.1. What training or education do you or does your staff need? and

2.3. What is the biggest professional development need right now?

Over the course of conducting focus groups, we found that participants in this conversational setting often co-mingled the concepts of training, education and professional development. Similarly, informants we interviewed focused on training and professional development needs with these questions because they had already outlined their education credential requirements in question 1.1. We, thus, present observations from questions 2.1 and 2.3 together, attempting to tease apart what providers and informants shared with us into the three distinct types of human capital development.

Current Education Needs

Current education needs most commonly cited	Comments elaborating on education needs (<i>analysis in italics</i>)
High School Diploma	Promising candidates lacking diploma have barriers to being hired
ECE Certificates	<i>Specific certificates infrequently specified</i>
ECE Degrees	<i>Specific levels infrequently specified</i> Head Start and ECEAP programs need unqualified hires to reach required education requirements (AA or BA in ECE) typically within 5 years of hire <i>Value of college-level degrees questioned by centers and FCCs with a moderate degree of extensiveness</i>
College credit for prior learning and experience	Experience should count for credits
Alternative pathways to demonstrate competency	Example: Apprenticeship

Participants were clear about the need for a high school diploma, and the lost opportunity they see some otherwise promising candidates face for lack of a diploma. Others expressed concern that new state licensing requirements include a high school diploma because some valued

existing employees have not earned one. Yet discussion of this need was brief and limited.

“...and the state just passed that everybody has to have a high school diploma, which to me is sad...because there are some really good people [employed in ECE] that don’t have a high school diploma.”
– Mason County participant

ECE certificates (college-level, sub-baccalaureate credentials), likewise, were cited as necessary, but discussion was brief and ambiguous as to the specific level of certificate and coursework most needed.

Participants somewhat frequently expressed skepticism about the importance of higher education degrees to direct-service ECE positions. The issue of low wages was at the forefront of comments questioning the value of degrees: Why would someone incur the expense and time costs of earning a degree only to earn low wages with little wage progression opportunities? This sentiment was emphasized more so in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties than in other locations.

Participants less-intensely but nonetheless frequently commented that formal education inadequately prepares people for the classroom. One participant related an experience with a new employee who’d recently completed a bachelors in ECE who she found sobbing in the corner of a classroom at the end of the day a few weeks into the job. The employee said she just wasn’t prepared for how hard the job is.

Entangled in these comments, we believe, is speculation, wariness, and misinformation about qualifications requirements set forth in newly adopted credential requirements in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), which become effective on August 1, 2019⁴.

For instance, participants in Mason County speculated that the future rules will require providers to have degrees (associates or bachelors). They went on to comment that there will be fewer providers if they have

⁴ WACs: Washington Administrative Code, regulations of executive branch agencies issued by authority of statutes. Like legislation and the Constitution, regulations are a source of primary law in Washington State. The WAC codifies the regulations and arranges them by subject or agency. See Appendix A for a full side-by-side comparison of existing and newly adopted qualification requirements per new WACs 170-300-0001-0505 as authorized by RCW 43.215.070 and 43.215.201; chapter 42.56 RCW.



to have degrees but aren't compensated for the corresponding level of education. A participant in rural Thurston County said she had an older employee for over a decade who retired early because she had a new law would require her to go to college for 12 credits. Another employee of 4 years left for the same reason. Participants from Grays Harbor County speculated that degrees would be required by the new WACs and noted that they'd prefer an experienced teacher over someone just coming out of college. In Lewis County, participants speculated that the new WACs would ultimately require a bachelor's degree and there wouldn't be capacity in the college system to supply enough new workers at that level.

“Regulations. I’m terrified of the new rules. I am willing to change and adapt, but I’m scared.”

– Pacific County Participant

Participants across the region identified the need for credit for prior learning and experience (PLE) and alternative pathways to demonstrate competency as an education need of particular importance. With passion, a few participants said that experience should count for credit. Others mentioned apprenticeship as a desirable model for assigning value to experience-based learning. Discussion touched on, albeit briefly, the fact that these alternatives would be more accessible for older workers with decades of experience (making the case for competency-based or PLE credit awards) and for many workers who face intensely long work hours and live in rural areas.

Current Training Needs

Current training needs most commonly cited	Comments elaborating on training needs
Child Care Basics (30 hour STARS)	<i>None</i>
Ongoing STARS training (10 hours/year)	Desire greater variety in class choices Need more knowledgeable trainers Insufficient STARS offerings on the Long Beach peninsula (and, generally, in Pacific Co) Rural providers sometimes repeat the same classes to get the hours
Classes for new teachers	<i>None</i>
First Aid/CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens	<i>None</i>





When we parse training from professional development needs with the notion that training covers the basic skills needed to start a job, the most frequently mentioned training needs were limited to basic requirements a typical prospective employee needs to obtain or keep a job. Those included Child Care Basics, ongoing STARS trainings (annual requirements), new teacher basics, and First Aid/CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens.

Current Professional Development Needs

Current professional development needs most commonly cited	Comments elaborating on professional development needs
Early Achievers	CLASS and ERS training, more on-site coaching
Regulatory changes (WACs)	Training for directors and teachers on WACs/changes to WACs
Trauma Informed Care	<i>None</i>
Challenging behaviors	Including de-escalation and social-emotional challenges
ACES – Adverse Childhood Experiences	<i>None</i>
Special Needs	Developmental and medical special needs
Bridges Out of Poverty/working with families in poverty	How to be supportive to families experiencing poverty
Working with parents	Communication with parents/guardians, parenting class resources to share with parents, family dynamics, parent-caregiver skill building workshops, family interventions
Child assessment	On-site observation coaching, child assessment methods
Infant-toddler	Want more infant/toddler programs and on-site coaching
Literacy and numeracy for the classroom	Need help keeping up with accelerated expectations for kindergarten readiness
Time management for the classroom	<i>None</i>
Dual language classrooms	Practical training on how to run a dual language classroom

We operationalized professional development as the full range of learning activities one engages in to improve, grow and advance in their current position and also in their career. Through this frame, participants and informants offered a rich array of desires for developmental learning to best serve children and families. The list of most cited needs indicates the primacy of emotional, physical and environmental needs of the

population: trauma informed care, special needs, family dynamics, poverty, challenging behavior, and infant-toddler needs.

At the other end of the spectrum of professional development, participants frequently cited needs for development that would help them comply with state licensing and quality improvement requirements. While those who participate in Early Achievers have regular access to coaches, some said it wasn't enough and want more. Given the pending WACs requiring slightly higher levels of qualifications, participants expressed with some intensity a desire to be trained on the "new WACs."

Most agreed that the workforce should have a way to earn college credits in ECE through STARS eligible trainings and on-the-job workplace-based learning.

2.2. Is the needed training readily available (what could be different that would help) (new hires vs. current workforce)?

Here again, participants and informants tended to co-mingle the concepts of education, training and professional development when talking about whether it's readily available and what challenges they face in accessing learning opportunities.

Most commonly cited issues with education/training/professional development availability and what could be different
1. [College] credit for classroom hours/work experience and STARS hours
2. STARS credit for high quality trainings
3. In-person/on-site classes and training preferred (vs. online)
4. Increased access to training for rural areas (outside of Olympia)
5. Variety in scheduled trainings and ECE program classes– Saturdays, evenings.
6. Cost of training, both to employer (can't pay wages/release time during trainings) and for employees (doing work related training off the clock)

Most participants, including all representing centers, called for earning college credit and/or STARS hours for the work experience, training, and professional development they do. More specifically, several expressed frustration that STARS hours aren't counted as education. And a couple informants wish that the high quality trainings their staff attend would count towards STARS.

FCCs in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties unanimously agreed that it's too hard for their employees and themselves (owners/operators) to complete the required 10 hours a year in continuing education because of time, class availability, and logistics. A subset of these FCCs said they



need child-friendly training environments so they can bring their own children. Otherwise, they cannot afford to find alternative care for their children during the evenings or weekends they're expected to take training.

FCCs in Pacific County similarly struggle to find training that is accessible given their remote location: Traveling to trainings in Aberdeen or Olympia is far enough away that doing so requires providers to close their home early in order to reach an evening class. Providers in Pacific County admitted that they repeat STARS classes just to get the hours needed.

One informant whose program is seated in a school district commented that they have 6 days a year programmed for continuing education and it's still not enough time to cover all the learning they need to do.

While nearly all center participants express a strong preference for in-person training, many also desire online training or a choice of in-person or online. Those who prefer in-person training appreciate hands-on learning, practicing interactions with an instructor, and networking among their peers. Two informants strongly preferred online training and want more online modules so that training is easier to fit into busy schedules.

Many who prefer in-person training further specified that they want on-site professional development opportunities at the workplace. A few went further, describing a need for "hands-on" training—that is, on-site trainings that incorporate elements of observation and coaching.

Wages paid during training was commented on periodically by participants and one informant. Many centers and FCCs said they pay the cost of training (e.g., fees associated with a class) but can't pay employees wages for the time they're in trainings. Employers empathized with employees on this situation; a few noting that it's a lot to ask a minimum wage employee to take trainings on their own time.

"If I require them to be there, I pay them to be there."

– Thurston County participant

Those who preferred a choice of in-person or online opportunities explained that they find it easier to schedule employees into online, self-paced learning modules that they can work on periodically during the



work day. This way, some employers are able to pay employee wages during training when interspersed in short durations during a work day.

Many cited the need for greater variety in class scheduling, calling for evenings and Saturdays. Participants in Lewis County feel that classes are generally accessible to workers, but noted that ECE courses offered by Centralia College should have different start times [for different sections of the same course] so that teachers aren't taking off from work at the same time.

Participants from Pacific County explained they cannot participate in Early Achievers Institutes because of distance and expense.

2.4. Thinking longer term, what do you see as the biggest professional development need a few years down the road?

Most commonly cited future professional development needs
1. Money to support continuing education and training – subsidies, scholarships, stipends, no/low cost trainings.
2. Credit for classroom work hours
3. On-site training
4. Trauma informed care
5. Extreme child behaviors – skills and consultations
6. Parent education/working with parents/families
7. Culture of poverty
8. Working with English language learners and their families; Spanish-English language interpretation.
9. ACES

Responses about the greatest future professional development needs were evenly split between *what* they most need to learn and *how* they need learning to happen. Overall, participants from centers and FCCs and informants from Head Start and ECEAP most want to have financial support for continuing education and training. This could be in the form of subsidies (e.g., reduced cost offerings), scholarships, stipends to cover wages during training, and no/low-cost trainings. They also want credit for classroom work experience, and more on-site offerings. When it comes to subject matter, the most pressing emerging needs are for knowledge, skills and abilities in trauma informed care, extreme behaviors, and working with parents experiencing poverty.



2.5. What new or expanded training or certificate programs would be valuable for your workers?

Most commonly cited new or expanded training of certificate programs of value
1. ECE certificates that align with Early Achievers
2. AA degree in ECE – in general
3. AA degree in ECE with tracks in family support/parent engagement, extreme behaviors, special education, and trauma informed care
4. Certificate and degree programs that provide instruction on dual language classroom administration and produce Spanish language speakers who are accredited to teach in the classroom
5. Expanding the labor pool with basic credentials (e.g., Child Care Basics /Initial Certificate)
6. ECE programs with lab schools embedded; ECE programs with more instructor-supported child care classroom time with children
7. ECE program that utilizes interns in the child care classroom
8. A program equal to the CDA (Child Development Associate) ⁵

The idea of aligning ECE certificates closely with Early Achievers was popular, especially among the few centers and FCCs who express intense stress of employee turnover negatively impacting their progress with the state’s quality rating and improvement system. Informants from Head Start/ECEAP programs participating in Early Achievers also expressed eagerness for a closer link between credential programs and the QRIS.

Centers and FCCs offered ideas about how ECE certificate and degree programs could be made more valuable to their workers. They suggest adding or enhancing curriculum tracks specializing in family support and parent community, extreme behaviors, and trauma informed care. A few participants strongly promoted the idea of ECE certificate and degree programs that use embedded lab schools and more time in the child care setting with an instructor. They also suggest practical learning through internships that are attached to certificate and degree programs.

Informants from the Grays Harbor area felt that Grays Harbor College’s new AA in ECE should be helpful in meeting employers’ needs for an educated workforce.

Participants from both Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties, and to a lesser degree, Lewis County, indicated a need for native Spanish speakers to be



⁵ CDA – Child Development Associate, an industry recognized credential based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.

incorporated more into the ECE workforce in order to serve an increasing dual language population.

Participants frequently and extensively speculated on increased educational and certificate needs that could be necessitated by newly adopted rules, effective August 1, 2019, as referenced earlier. Appendix A provides a comparison of current qualifications requirements for licensed centers and FCCs next to new requirements.

2.6 What would you like decision makers in the workforce development system to know?

This question was introduced on a time-permitting basis in several of the focus groups. We were curious to know what providers themselves most want decision makers in the workforce system to know about the ECE industry. Some comments follow:

- *We provide care for the parents in the workforce.*
- *Parents cannot afford full-time child care. They use a patchwork of people to watch kids.*
- *Parents work longer hours than child care is open.*
- *Early learning prepares children for the workforce.*
- *Children in our area need social and emotional nurturing.*
- *Providers would like to invite more businesses and local organizations to become involved as volunteers.*
- *I am not a babysitter. I am a professional.*
- *We teach children kindness and responsibility.*
- *We're afraid that regulations will put us out of business.*
- *By shutting our doors we would cripple the county [the economy] so they need to find a way to help keep our doors open.*



Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Finding 1. Wages drive a structural worker shortage in ECE industry

Participants' and informants' comments about wages, when combined with labor market economic theory, can be inferred to mean that wages are a central driving structural contributor to the workforce shortages reported in the ECE industry.

Participants in Grays Harbor reported that the state's former Career Wage Ladder program effectively addressed many wage issues in the industry and called for its return.

Finding 2. Tight labor markets, low wages, and challenging work contribute most to the lack of high quality, qualified candidates

Participants' and informants' comments about candidate qualifications and quality indicate a substantial strain on the current labor pool, and can be inferred as consequences of other labor market factors, including below equilibrium wages, the demanding nature of the work, and macro-economic conditions of low unemployment and high economic growth rates.

Finding 3. Research and administrative regulations place higher value on education credentials than do centers and FCCs

While there was widespread agreement that a diploma or ECE certificate is valuable, centers and FCCs based that importance on the fact that these credentials are required by law for certain positions, rather than necessitated by requirements of the work itself. [See analysis of Q2.1. and 2.3]

Finding 4. Lack of sufficient pathways to education credentials limit career growth

Both participants and informants feel the industry would benefit from more efficient pathways to college-level credits, certificates and degrees through credit for prior learning and experience, competency-based credentials, and apprenticeship. They believe that much of the continuing education and training workers have to take annually could count towards college credit, thus easing the path to attaining a degree or certificate. [See analysis of Q2.1 and 2.3]



Finding 5. Financial help and insufficient time hamper new hires and incumbent workers from certificate and degree attainment

Industry employers need financial support for continuing education and training of both new hires and incumbent workers. This could be in the form of subsidies (e.g., reduced cost offerings), scholarships, stipends to cover wages during training, and no/low-cost trainings. But they also need extended periods of time to achieve academic credentials: PDPs in Head Start have typically provided 3 years for a hire to gain required credentials but new federal requirements shorten this to 2 years going forward;. The new WACs provide current members of the workforce up to 5 years to gain newly required credentials from August 1, 2019. [See analysis of Q2.4.)

Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations address systems-level policy and market issues that require improvement in order for specific workforce development needs identified by this analysis to be fully met.

1. **Compensation:** Market-wide low wages, wage compression and a lack of employee benefits drive difficulties finding and retaining qualified workers.

“I had one [employee] for 10 years and she went on and got her degree and now she’s a paraeducator, but we had her for 10 years. In the scheme of things, that’s a long time in child care.

She did her CDA and then she got her AA.”

– Thurston County participant

Recommended actions:

- Leaders and analytic staff representing the state’s workforce development system should continue and increase engagement in the state early childhood workforce compensation workgroup.
- Recommendations from the compensation workgroup’s report, due to the Governor Inslee and the legislature December 1, 2018, should be evaluated by leaders of the region’s and state’s workforce development system and prioritized for legislative advocacy.
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- The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council should assess the state compensation report findings for possible opportunities to pilot proposed solutions regionally.

2. ECE Industry Delineation: The ECE industry in the Pacific Mountain region should be conceptualized as a birth-to-3rd grade field rather than what is often organized into two separate fields, birth-to-pre-K early childhood and K-12 education. A broader conception recognizes natural career pathways from ECE into K-3rd grade.

Recommended actions:

- Conduct a sector profile describing both the workforce and economic features of the ECE industry, inclusive of birth-to-3rd grade education and related services, for the Pacific Mountain region.
- Develop a systematic strategy to calibrate key entry points into the ECE industry in order to attract and retain more highly qualified workers. Calibrating entry points requires:
 - better awareness of about how new workers enter the industry and, accordingly, recruiting at key transitions between school and work and between employers; and
 - recognizing that ECE workers often find career progression by moving from one employer to another, including moving from private child care and Head Start/ECEAP to K-12 schools.

3. Flexible Industry-Specific Training Resources: Resources to fund customized and industry/employer-specific training are limited and, in some cases, relatively inflexible. Scholarship funding has been available for recent waves of professional development. However, compared to most other states, Washington has historically ranked poorly at supplying state support for employer- and industry-specific customized workforce training and development⁶. New WAC requirements and the diverse, unique needs of local clusters of ECE employers will drive more need for customized training. Furthermore, while short-term grants and educational stipends may help meet certain training needs (e.g., offering



⁶ Duscha, Steve and Wanda Lee Graves. (2006). *The Employer As Customer: State-Financed Customized Training*. US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

site-specific classes for a short duration), but are inadequate in duration for the majority of incumbent ECE workers on professional development plans. These workers typically need 2-5 years to reach required credentials or degrees.

Recommended action:

- The Pacific Mountain WDC should advocate for continued funding of Governor Inslee’s Upskill-Backfill Workforce Development Initiative in order to help groups of ECE industry employers develop existing workers and backfill them with thoughtfully-identified newcomers, including those from populations historically facing barriers to employment whenever appropriate.
- The Pacific Mountain WDC should engage partners in the industry to identify and fund longer-term customized job skills (employer-specific) and incumbent worker training opportunities for ECE employers in the region.

4. Implementation of Newly Required Qualifications: The new child care licensing WACs will require workers gain credentials in ECE. It’s unclear how well existing educational capacity will be able to meet demand for these credentials.

Recommended action:

- The Pacific Mountain WDC should work with regional ECE employers and continuing education organizations and state DCYF officials on the implementation of the new WACs, including opportunities to fund incumbent worker training.

5. Credit for Prior Learning and Competency-Based Credentials: DCYF is currently examining alternatives to holding college credits, including credit for prior learning and experience and equivalency processes. Similarly, Washington Childcare Centers Association (WCCA) has circulated an equivalencies proposal calling for alternatives methods for the workforce to meet new qualifications requirements set forth in WAC.

Recommended action:

- The Pacific Mountain WDC should monitor for policy recommendations and opportunities to support and pilot alternatives to traditional certificate and degree earning pathways for incumbent workers and those changing careers.



Specific Education and Training Recommendations

These recommendations, when taken in context with the strategic ones above, will support forward momentum in the ECE industry in the near term.

1. Convene one or more local ECE industry panels to collaborate on workforce development tactics and collaborative agreements among key partners:

- a) Seek funds to offset costs of both incumbent worker professional development and new hire basic qualifications, from sources including but not limited to Governor Inslee’s Upskill-Backfill Initiative (or its successor from the governor’s WIOA discretionary fund) and Washington’s Job Skills and Customized Training Programs from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- b) Seek funds to underwrite the workforce training and development aspects of regional Head Start and ECEAP programs.
- c) Facilitate the execution of MOUs and provide or underwrite legal review of agreements and local match funding mechanisms; facilitate completion of local and inter-local articulation agreements.

2. Incumbent worker and new hire support to key ECE employers, with a focus on Sound to Harbor Early Learning:

Sound to Harbor Early Learning Programs has seventeen Head Start/ECEAP centers across a three county area of Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Mason counties, and operates the Early Learning Center at South Puget Sound Community College. As cited in this assessment, these programs are currently facing extreme workforce shortages in both the availability of qualified new hires and in the number of incumbent workers requiring further professional development and credentials in order to remain employed. Pacific Mountain WDC should provide support for incumbent worker and new hire training for key ECE employers, with a particular focus on Sound to Harbor Early Learning’s immediate needs.

3. Birth-to-3rd grade ECE industry entry points model:

The supply of prospective ECE workers needs to be primed for the demands of the work. The Pacific Mountain WDC should pilot a birth-to-3rd grade ECE industry entry points model through new or expanded



relationships with secondary programs like GRADS, Governor Inslee’s Career-Connected Learning Initiative, career lattice events, and sponsorship of internship programs with local high schools so that new workers are effectively identified at key entry points and ready for the demands of the work upon hire.

4. Support expansion of ESD 113 Sound to Harbor’s Parent U Program:

Sound to Harbor’s Parent U is a free job training program offering classes and on-site training for parents of current and former students wanting to apply for teacher assistant and program substitute positions. Participants take 42 hours classroom training in 2 hour increments and complete a 100 hour practicum. In the last program year, 6 out of 11 participants were hired into Sound to Harbor Early Learning programs. Program officials indicated this model has great potential for scaling.

More information about Parent U is at: <https://tinyurl.com/yd9rhInt>. A similar initiative, Community U, engaging WorkFirst participants in early learning pathways, has also been piloted at Sound to Harbor. Further work is needed to determine if and how Community U can borrow from successful elements of Parent U.

The Pacific Mountain WDC should support expansion of ESD 113 Sound to Harbor’s Parent U Program and consider supporting continued testing and evaluation of their Community U Program.



Appendices

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and current ECE programs

- A1. Education and training requirements by program and provider type, Washington State
- A2. Current ECE certificate and degree programs offer by colleges in the Pacific Mountain Region.

Appendix B: Provider and capacity trends, market and subsidy rates

- B1. Licensed child care provider trends, Pacific Mountain Region
- B2. Licensed child care capacity trends, Pacific Mountain Region
- B3. Center subsidy and market rates, Pacific Mountain Region
- B4. FCC subsidy and market rates, Pacific Mountain Region

Appendix C. Focus group interview prompts

Appendix D. Focus group qualitative tabulations

Appendix E. Interview qualitative tabulations

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

Washington State Child Care and Early Learning Industry Education and Training Requirements

	Current Requirements ¹			Newly Adopted Requirements (New WACs) Effective August 2019 ²	
	Education	Initial Training	Ongoing Training	Education and Experience	Training
Center Director or Program Supervisor (if Director does not meet education qualifications)	Current Child Development Associate certificate (CDA) OR Complete a minimum number of college quarter credits in ECE based on center license capacity (10 credits for 12 or less children, 25 credits for 13-24 children and 45 credits for 25+ children)	Child Care BASICS 30 STARS hours OR CDA (equivalent credential or twelve or more college credits in early childhood education or child development) OR Associate of Arts (AA) (associate of arts and sciences or higher college degree in early childhood education or child development)	10 clock hours (including training on management and administration) OR 1 college credit of continuing education Infant Safe Sleep	ECE state certificate or equivalent within 5 years (or at time of hire if hired after 2019) AND 2 years of experience as a teacher of children in any age group enrolled in the early learning program and at least six months of experience in administration or management or a department approved plan	All providers: Child Care Basics Abuse/Neglect Emergency Preparedness Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abuse Head and Trauma and Safe Sleep (if licensed for infants)
Center Lead Teacher	High School Education	Child Care BASICS 30 STARS hours OR CDA (equivalent credential or twelve or more college credits in early childhood education or child development) OR Associate of Arts (AA) (associate of arts and sciences or higher college degree in early childhood education or child development) HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens	Infant Safe Sleep	ECE initial certificate or equivalent within 5 years, or 5 years from being employed or promoted into this position AND Progress towards ECE short certificate or equivalent within 2 years of receiving an ECE initial certificate, or 7 years from being employed or promoted into this position	Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness Blood Borne Pathogens CPR/First Aid All (assistant teachers, aides if appropriate): Restraint
Center Assistant Teacher	No Education Requirements	HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens	Infant Safe Sleep	ECE initial certificate or equivalent within 5 years of the date this section becomes effective, or from being employed or promoted to this position	All (except assistants, aides): Medication Management and Administration
Additional Center Requirements: At least one staff member present per room must be CPR/First Aid certified					

¹ Consolidated from Child Care Center Licensing Rules – [chapters 170-295](#) and [170-300](#) WAC and Family Home Child Care Licensing Rules – [chapters 170-296A](#) and [170-300](#) WAC

² Consolidated from <http://lawfilesexext.leg.wa.gov/law/wsr/2018/14/18-14-079.htm>

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

Washington State Child Care and Early Learning Industry Education and Training Requirements

	Current Requirements			Newly Adopted Requirements (New WACs) Effective August 2019	
	Education	Initial Training	Ongoing Training	Education and Experience	Training
FCC Owner	High School Diploma OR Equivalent Education (one of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED • ECE initial certificate • 45 college credits • Completion of 12 years of elementary and secondary education • If licensed prior to March 31, 2012, a Level 3 rating 	Child Care BASICS 30 STARS hours CPR/First Aid HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens	10 hours Infant Safe Sleep CPR/First Aid	ECE initial certificate, or equivalent, within 5 years AND ECE short certificate or equivalent within 2 years after the initial certificate	All providers: Child Care Basics Abuse/Neglect Emergency Preparedness Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abuse Head and Trauma and Safe Sleep (if licensed for infants) Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness
FCC Primary Staff	No Education Requirements	Child Care BASICS 30 STARS hours CPR/First Aid HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens	10 hours Infant Safe Sleep CPR/First Aid	FCC Lead Teacher: ECE initial certificate or equivalent within 5 years	Blood Borne Pathogens CPR/First Aid
FCC Assistant	No Education Requirements	CPR/First Aid HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens	CPR/First Aid		All (assistant teachers, aides if appropriate): Restraint All (except assistants, aides): Medication Management and Administration

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

Washington State ECEAP Education Requirements

Lead teacher qualifications

All persons serving in the role of ECEAP lead teacher must meet one of the following qualifications:

- An associate or higher degree with the equivalent of 30 college quarter credits in early childhood education. These 30 credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree; or
- A valid Washington State Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education (Pre-K-Grade 3) or Early Childhood Special Education.

If the best candidate for the position is not fully qualified, the contractor must ensure the newly hired staff person is on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to fully meet the qualifications of their role within five years from date of hire.

Assistant Teacher qualifications

All persons serving in the role of ECEAP assistant teacher must meet one of the following qualifications:

- Employment as an ECEAP assistant teacher in the same agency before July 1, 1999;
- The equivalent of 12 college quarter credits in early childhood education;
- Initial or higher Washington State Early Childhood Education Certificate; or
- A current Child Development Associate (CDA) credential awarded by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition.

If the best candidate for the position is not fully qualified, the contractor must ensure the newly hired staff person is on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to fully meet the qualifications of their role within five years from date of hire.

ECEAP Family Support Staff qualifications

All persons serving in the role of ECEAP family support staff must meet one of the following qualifications:

- Employment in the same position in the same agency before July 1, 1999;
- An associate or higher degree with the equivalent of 30 college quarter credits of adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, early childhood education, child development, psychology, or another field directly related to their job
- A DCYF -approved credential from a comprehensive and competency-based Family/Social Service training program that increases knowledge and skills in providing direct services to families.
- Home Visitor Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential from the Council of Professional Recognition.

If the best candidate for the position is not fully qualified, the contractor must ensure the newly hired staff person is on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to fully meet the qualifications of their role ECEAP Performance Standards - effective July 1, 2018 within five years from date of hire.

Consolidated from https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/eceap/2018-19_ECEAP_Performance_Standards_0.pdf

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

Federal Head Start Education Requirements

Position	Education	Experience	Competency
Early Head Start or Head Start director	Baccalaureate degree (minimum)	Experience in supervision of staff, fiscal management, and administration	
Head Start center-based teacher	No less than 50 % of all Head Start teachers, nationwide, must have a baccalaureate degree in child development, early childhood education, or equivalent coursework. (ii) At least an associate's or bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education, equivalent coursework, or otherwise meet the requirements of section 648 (a)(3)(B) of the Act		Demonstrate competency to provide effective and nurturing teacher-child interactions, plan and implement learning experiences that ensure effective curriculum implementation and use of assessment and promote children's progress across the standards described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five and applicable state early learning and development standards, including for children with disabilities and dual language
Early Head Start center-based teacher that provides direct services to infants and toddlers	At a minimum, a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.		See above (Head Start center-based teacher)
Head Start assistant teacher	At a minimum, a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a state awarded certificate that meets or exceeds the requirements for a CDA credential, are enrolled in a program that will lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree or, are enrolled in a CDA credential program to be completed with two years of the time of hire.		See above (Head Start center-based teacher)
Family child care provider	At a minimum, enrolled in a Family Child Care CDA program or state equivalent, or an associate's or baccalaureate degree program in child development or early education prior to beginning service provisions, and for the credential acquire it within eighteen months of beginning to provide services.	Previous early child care experiences	See above (Head Start center-based teacher)

Consolidated from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/staff-qualifications.pdf>

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

Currently Available Certificate and Degree Programs, Program Capacity and Completions, 2014-15 – 2016-17

College	Program Title	Credit Hours	Award Type	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
				Completions/Awards		
Centralia	State Initial Early Childhood Education Certificate	12	C	0	5	8
Centralia	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – General	20	C	0	5	7
Centralia	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Infant Toddler Care	20	C	0	3	5
Centralia	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – School-Age Care	20	C	0	1	4
Centralia	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Family Child Care	20	C	0	1	5
Centralia	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Administration	20	C	0	3	5
Centralia	State Early Childhood Education Certificate	47-52	C	0	5	3
Centralia	Early Child Ed Teacher/Child Care Specialist	48	C	N/A	N/A	N/A
Centralia	Early Childhood Education	92	AAS			
Centralia	Early Childhood Education	94	AAS-T	6	4	8
Centralia	Bachelor of Applied Science- Teacher Education-Elementary Education and Special Education	180	BAS	0	0	0
Grays Harbor	State Initial Early Childhood Education Certificate	12	C	2	8	7
Grays Harbor	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – General	20	C	2	6	2
Grays Harbor	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Infant Toddler Care	20	C	1	1	1
Grays Harbor	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – School-Age Care	20	C	0	0	1
Grays Harbor	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Family Child Care	20	C	1	1	0
Grays Harbor	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Administration	20	C	0	2	0
Grays Harbor	State Early Childhood Education Certificate	47	C	1	1	1
Grays Harbor	Early Childhood Education	90	AAS	8	0	2
Grays Harbor	Bachelor of Applied Science- Teacher Education-Elementary Education and Special Education	185-187	BAS	0	0	0

Appendix A: Education and training requirements and currently available certificate and degree programs

College	Program Title	Credit Hours	Award Type	2014-15 Completions/Awards	2015-16 Completions/Awards	2016-17 Completions/Awards
Olympic	State Initial Early Childhood Education Certificate	12	C	30	45	29
Olympic	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – General	20	C	24	28	20
Olympic	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Infant Toddler Care	20	C	16	10	10
Olympic	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – School-Age Care	20	C	9	14	8
Olympic	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Family Child Care	20	C	3	9	9
Olympic	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Administration	20	C	21	27	19
Olympic	State Early Childhood Education Certificate	47-52	C	17	13	17
Olympic	Early Childhood Education	90	AAS-T			
Olympic	Early Childhood Education	90	ATA	18	34	14
South Puget Sound	State Initial Early Childhood Education Certificate	12	C	45	19	29
South Puget Sound	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – General	20	C	26	15	21
South Puget Sound	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Infant Toddler Care	20	C	9	1	2
South Puget Sound	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – School-Age Care	20	C	3	0	0
South Puget Sound	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Family Child Care	20	C	4	1	0
South Puget Sound	State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Administration	20	C	3	2	5
South Puget Sound	State Early Childhood Education Certificate	47	C	11	3	18
South Puget Sound	Early Childhood Education	90	AAS			
South Puget Sound	Early Childhood Education	91	AAS-T	9	9	9

Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Appendix B: Provider and Capacity Trends

Table B3: Capacity Trends, 2013-2017, Pacific Mountain Region and Washington Statewide

	Statewide					PAC MTN Region 2013						PAC MTN Region 2014						PAC MTN Region 2015						PAC MTN Region 2016						PAC MTN Region 2017					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Grays Hbr	Mason	Thurston	Lewis	Pacific	Total	Grays Hbr	Mason	Thurston	Lewis	Pacific	Total	Grays Hbr	Mason	Thurston	Lewis	Pacific	Total	Grays Hbr	Mason	Thurston	Lewis	Pacific	Total	Grays Hbr	Mason	Thurston	Lewis	Pacific	Total
CAPACITY FOR CHILDREN (# of slots for children in care, includes both filled and vacant)																																			
Total Capacity by Type of Facility	165,802	166,348	169,631	169,631	172,583	1,402	904	6,816	1,043	253	10,418	1,323	855	6,772	1,031	245	10,226	1,264	819	6,762	1,037	271	10,153	1,246	840	6,796	1,081	271	10,234	1,268	908	7,074	1,264	247	10,761
Center	106,001	107,151	112,141	112,141	113,792	1,015	562	4,196	716	187	6,676	962	564	4,222	714	188	6,650	888	564	4,280	740	214	6,686	915	624	4,236	802	208	6,785	973	708	4,459	979	184	7,303
FCC	39,134	36,406	34,487	34,487	33,620	387	317	1,543	287	66	2,600	361	266	1,446	277	57	2,407	376	230	1,343	257	57	2,263	331	191	1,210	239	63	2,034	295	200	1,140	245	63	1,943
Exempt Child Care Facilities	20,667	22,791	23,003	23,003	25,171		25	1,077	40		1,142		25	1,104	40		1,169		25	1,139	40		1,204		25	1,350	40		1,415			1,475	40	0	1,515
Total Capacity by Schedule																																			
Full Time Only	21,046	23,669	26,787	26,787	31,292	54	100	1,027	81	12	1,274	48	71	840	91	36	1,086	69	68	878	110	42	1,167	54	122	833	132	62	1,203	95	173	1,295	324	38	1,925
Part Time Only	2,006	1,784	2,097	2,097	2,425			61			61			67			67			162			162			197			197			204	6		210
Either Full Time or Part Time	142,780	140,722	140,735	140,735	138,840	1,348	804	5,728	962	241	9,083	1,275	784	5,865	940	209	9,073	1,195	751	5,722	927	209	8,804	1,192	718	5,766	949	209	8,834	1,173	735	5,555	934	209	8,606
Full Year	150,947	150,815	153,691	153,691	155,533	1,195	879	5,625	965	170	8,834	1,116	830	5,518	963	185	8,612	1,057	794	5,500	949	191	8,491	1,039	815	5,323	993	211	8,381	1,021	908	5,568	1,176	187	8,860
School Year Only	14,609	15,004	15,489	15,489	16,375	207	25	1,191	78	83	1,584	207	25	1,254	68	60	1,614	207	25	1,262	88	60	1,642	207	25	1,473	88	60	1,853	247	1,486	88	60	1,881	
Summer Only											0						0						0						0						-
Rotating	16,018	15,275	15,106	15,106	14,265	158	12	238	146	33	587	148	12	211	199	24	594	148	12	157	167	30	514	127	12	124	203	30	496	106	12	130	272	39	559
Temporary	56,905	54,683	54,258	54,258	50,496	756	313	2,130	572	203	3,974	753	313	2,083	543	180	3,872	724	295	1,932	505	186	3,642	662	289	2,119	504	186	3,760	629	297	2,214	465	135	3,740
Evening	16,480	15,638	15,045	15,045	15,115	86	40	378	224	17	745	94	16	392	221	17	740	78	16	360	171	17	642	81	16	348	158	17	620	81	16	425	210	17	749
Overnight	4,601	3,739	3,651	3,651	3,549			108	24	8	140			100	33	8	141			107	33	8	148			117	24	8	149			117	24	8	149
Weekend Care	13,380	13,565	12,753	12,753	12,581	51	8	179	95	17	350	60	14	187	116	17	394	50	8	174	104	17	353	53	8	169	121	17	368	53	8	181	110	8	360
Total Capacity by Subsidy Acceptance																																			
DSHS/State Govt	128,959	126,643	125,946	125,946	125,307	1,396	892	5,565	1,011	253	9,117	1,309	834	5,498	1,009	245	8,895	1,239	813	5,297	972	251	8,572	1,223	822	5,431	976	251	8,703	1,222	862	5,655	1,065	227	9,031
State Govt. WCCC (Birth-PreK)*			95,552	95,552	95,502												0						0	1,202	777	3,958	826	231	6,994	1,180	850	4,026	842	207	7,105
Local Subsidy	13,823	13,275	13,275	13,275	17,156	569	269	141			979	473	269	141			883	473	269	141	18		901	461	329	194	25	1,009	458	329	71	327	8	1,193	
Sliding Scale	14,074	96,674	96,674	96,674	100,847	137		330	32		499	786	661	3,722	487	97	5,753	761	649	3,805	452	97	5,764	773	694	3,711	460	97	5,735	747	688	3,591	448	82	5,556
Other	6,978	9,459	9,459	96,674	11,094			841			841			821			821			951			951			942			942			938			938
Total Unduplicated	131,708	144,031	146,129	146,129	146,475	1,396	892	5,975	1,011	253	9,527	1,309	834	6,242	1,019	245	9,649	1,239	813	6,230	972	251	9,505	1,223	822	6,352	1,016	251	9,664	1,234	870	6,566	1,065	227	9,962
Total Capacity for Special Services																																			
Drop In	68,798	67,621	65,909	65,909	64,031	806	716	3,734	712	137	6,105	802	674	3,613	642	128	5,859	779	644	3,401	582	134	5,540	762	674	3,467	581	134	5,618	714	688	3,579	551	143	5,675
Transport	54,829	57,655	58,070	58,070	58,443	602	264	2,166	37	113	3,182	627	132	2,211	47	113	3,130	566	120	2,301	49	113	3,149	566	120	2,234	49	113	3,082	575	184	2,427	37	164	3,387
Does Not Speak English	4,706	5,005	4,951	4,951	4,408						0						0						0						0					12	12
Speaks English & Add'l Language	71,410	75,528	77,003	77,003	80,884	248	110	1,839	326	83	2,606	178	110	1,867	296	60	2,511	178	110	1,714	316	66	2,384	139	101	1,652	359	66	2,317	129	101	1,730	470	66	2,496
Total Capacity by Child Age (duplicated - see notes on provider data)																																			
Infants	17,713	16,502	16,711	16,711	97,538	168	119	651	114	20	1,072	156	99	614	104	20	993	142	95	604	98	22	961	128	83	572	94	22	899	124	90	534	113	22	883
Toddlers	32,032	30,040	30,275	30,275	119,188	328	201	1,260	264	45	2,098	314	193	1,279	245	50	2,081	324	188	1,268	229	53	2,062	293	174	1,261	216	53	1,997	289	201	1,283	240	54	2,067
Pre-School	82,885	78,378	80,207	80,207	141,939	726	423	2,812	564	137	4,662	673	381	2,744	565	160	4,523	652	368	2,597	541	166	4,324	621	341	2,533	505	166	4,166	605	365	2,571	527	136	4,204
School-age	75,323	70,619	72,359	72,359	128,717	571	355	3,019	513	114	4,572	560	314	2,944	513	90	4,421	555	299	2,995	482	96	4,427	535	272	3,094	453	96	4,450	556	267	3,166	484	81	4,554

Source: Child Care Aware of Washington

*State Govt subsidy includes DBHR, Homeless, Seasonal Agriculture and Working Connections School Age Only. State Govt WCCC (Birth to PreK) includes providers who accept Working Connections Child Care subsidy and are Early Achievers participants. As of 8/1/2016 Early Achievers participation is a requirement for eligibility to serve subsidy children age's birth to preschool.

Note: Total capacity by child age slots don't fit neatly into age groups for family child care where slots could be filled with a child of a wide range of ages. When we show capacity by age group, it's the maximum capacity for the age group, e.g., the preschool capacity is how many preschoolers could be in care if all potential slots that could be filled by preschoolers were filled by preschoolers. Any slots could also be filled by infants, toddlers, or school-age kids are going to be duplicated across the age groups. In other words, you can't add up the capacity for all the age groups because that will be higher than the actual total capacity.

Appendix B. Center Rates by County, Pacific Mountain Region and Washington Statewide, 2017

	Infant				Toddler				Pre-School				School-Age*			
	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting
Grays Harbor	\$ 827	\$ 706	\$ 737	100%	\$ 710	\$ 613	\$ 650	100%	\$ 620	\$ 559	\$ 572	95%	\$ 607	\$ 325	\$ 325	5%
Lewis	\$ 827	\$ 754	\$ 794	100%	\$ 710	\$ 657	\$ 705	92%	\$ 620	\$ 598	\$ 645	100%	\$ 607	\$ 325	\$ 363	50%
Mason	\$ 827	\$ 763	\$ 808	80%	\$ 710	\$ 676	\$ 702	100%	\$ 620	\$ 592	\$ 606	100%	\$ 607	\$ 368	\$ 433	n/a
Pacific	\$ 827	\$ 802	\$ 802	100%	\$ 710	\$ 661	\$ 688	100%	\$ 620	\$ 520	\$ 585	100%	\$ 607	No child care centers		
Thurston	\$ 827	\$ 997	\$ 1,083	98%	\$ 710	\$ 867	\$ 974	98%	\$ 620	\$ 769	\$ 867	98%	\$ 607	\$ 494	\$ 563	5%
STATEWIDE		\$ 1,101	\$ 1,387	85%		\$ 936	\$ 1,205	88%		\$ 832	\$ 1,049	84%		\$ 507	\$ 637	33%

Source: Child Care Aware of Washington

***NOTES ON SCHOOL-AGE RATES:** The school-age rates shown above do not include kindergarten. Also they indicate the rates for school-age children during the school year and, for providers who use an hourly rate, are based on a 20-hour a week schedule. The rates for school-age children during the summer are approximately the same as for pre-school children.

PROVIDER DISCOUNTS: While some providers give discounts when caring for two or more children from the same family, these are not included in the calculations.

No child care centers: indicates no centers serve that age group in the county.

No rates available indicates that at least one provider served that age group in that county, but either (a) no rates were reported or (b) there were very few providers for the age group (three or fewer) and non of them gave permission to publish their rates.

Appendix B.FCC Rates by County, Pacific Mountain Region and Washington Statewide, 2017

	Infant				Toddler				Pre-School				School-Age*			
	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting	Subsidy Rate	Median Rate	75th Percentile	% Prov Reporting
Grays Harbor	\$ 722	\$ 607	\$ 687	100%	\$ 628	\$ 615	\$ 650	96%	\$ 589	\$ 542	\$ 607	96%	\$ 555	\$ 325	\$ 433	4%
Lewis	\$ 722	\$ 652	\$ 752	100%	\$ 628	\$ 639	\$ 684	100%	\$ 589	\$ 587	\$ 612	95%	\$ 555	\$ 466	\$ 586	33%
Mason	\$ 722	\$ 650	\$ 745	95%	\$ 628	\$ 607	\$ 683	90%	\$ 589	\$ 550	\$ 618	95%	\$ 555	\$ 338	\$ 514	5%
Pacific	\$ 722	\$ 650	\$ 650	86%	\$ 628	\$ 563	\$ 585	100%	\$ 589	\$ 563	\$ 563	100%	\$ 555	\$ 358	\$ 450	n/a
Thurston	\$ 722	\$ 750	\$ 849	99%	\$ 628	\$ 702	\$ 777	98%	\$ 589	\$ 628	\$ 696	98%	\$ 555	\$ 433	\$ 542	2%
STATEWIDE		\$ 867	\$ 997	89%		\$ 780	\$ 949	89%		\$ 676	\$ 845	89%		\$ 433	\$ 585	43%

Source: Child Care Aware of Washington

***NOTES ON SCHOOL-AGE RATES:** The school-age rates shown above do not include kindergarten. Also they indicate the rates for school-age children during the school year and, for providers who use an hourly rate, are based on a 20-hour a week schedule. The rates for school-age children during the summer are approximately the same as for pre-school children.

PROVIDER DISCOUNTS: While some providers give discounts when caring for two or more children from the same family, these are not included in the calculations.

No family child care indicates no family child care providers serve that age group in the county.

No rates available indicates that at least one provider served that age group in that county, but either (a) no rates were reported or (b) there were very few providers for the age group (three or fewer) and none of them gave permission to publish their rates.

1. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention

1.1. What qualifications are you seeking in candidates?

Teachers

Teaching Assistant

Any other common positions?

1.2. Are you finding you are able to hire high quality staff?

1.3. What is your experience with turnover of staff? Follow up, if needed: Would you say this is a large concern?

1.3.1. What causes staff to stay?

1.3.2. What reasons do staff give for leaving?

1.4. What staffing challenges, if any, are you facing?

1.5. Have you talked with others who hold positions similar to yours? If so, what can you share about their experiences in hiring and retaining staff?

1.6. In a perfect world, what would it take to have high quality staff who stay in their jobs?

2. Professional Development and Training

2.1. What training or education do you or does your staff need?

2.2. Is the needed training readily available (what could be different that would help) (new hires vs. current workforce)?

2.3. What is the biggest professional development need right now?

2.4. Thinking longer term, what do you see as the biggest professional development need a few years down the road?

2.5. What new or expanded training or certificate programs would be valuable for your workers?

2.6. What would you like decision makers in the workforce development system to know?

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
 May-August, 2018

Focus Groups: Centers in Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, and Pacific Counties (n = 21)

Statement	Owners/Directors in Agreement (21 total)
Hiring/Retaining Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to pay livable wages 	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff turnover a concern 	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding high quality employees 	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECE a stepping stone into the school district 	10 (Aberdeen, Lewis, Pacific County)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will work for minimum wage with increased training/education? 	14
Reasons Staff Give for Leaving	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low wages 	14 (Yelm, Lewis, Aberdeen)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burnout 	12 (Olympia, Lewis, Pacific)
What would it take to hire high quality staff?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher wages 	21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits 	10 (Olympia, Yelm, Aberdeen)
Statement	Owners/Directors in Agreement (21 total)
Why do staff stay?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy the job/Love the work 	17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers feel supported/appreciated 	18
Professional Development Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person/on-site classes and training (vs. online) 	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to training for rural areas (outside of Olympia) 	8 (Yelm, Aberdeen)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credit for classroom hours/work experience and STARS hours 	20

Focus Groups: Family Homes in Mason, Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties (n = 12)

Statement	Participants in Agreement (12 total)
Hiring/Retaining Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low wages 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding high quality employees 	7
Why might you might leave this work?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing requirements 	8
Why do you continue to stay in this work?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children 	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy what I do 	7
Future Needs for FCCs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher wages 	12
Professional Development Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Needs 	10
Concerns	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCCs will be regulated out of business 	10

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
 May-August, 2018

Focus Groups: Nannies and License-Exempt Preschools in Thurston County (n = 10)

Statement	Participants in Agreement (10 total)
Employment Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wages 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding positions with enough hours 	6
Why might you leave a position?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No benefits 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotionally draining 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to a career that is professionalized 	10
Job turnover	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average time spent with family is 3 years 	9
Why do you stay?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get needs and interests met 	7
Statement	Participants in Agreement (10 total)
Professional Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR/First Aid 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby sign language 	4

Focus Groups: Combined participants (N = 43)

Statement	Participants in Agreement (43 total)
Hiring and Retaining Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low wages 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding high quality employees 	23 (Centers/FCCs)
Why do staff/you stay?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy the work/children 	33

Head Start and ECEAP Key Informant Interviews from Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties:

What positions do you most commonly employ?	Number of Program Directors Citing This Position (n=5)
1. Teachers	
2. Education Specialist	
3. Assistant Teacher	
4. Program Coordinator	
5. Center Support Aid/Center Assistant	
6. Family Support Staff	
7. Substitute Teachers	
8. Behavioral Health Specialist	
9. Nutrition Staff (cook, cook aids)	
10. Bus Driver	
11. Managers	
12. Administrative Staff (including secretaries)	
13. Supervisors	

What qualifications are you seeking in candidates?	Qualifications listed by program (eg, program a., program b...)
1. Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BA in ECE or related and 1+ years' experience b. AA in ECE (at least 30 credits); BA in ECE preferred c. BA in ECE or related preferred. d. Certificated teachers with ECE or special ed (NOTE: Program d. is blended ECEAP and Special Education, therefore must have certificated teachers) e. AA with ECE credits
2. Education Specialist	<i>Not specified in detail</i>
3. Assistant Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. AA in ECE preferred; CDA +2 years preschool experience accepted; HS diploma plus some preschool experience and desire to gain credentials on plan accepted. c. AA in ECE preferred; 12 credit certificate accepted. d. AA degree or pass a paraprofessional test. If new hire lacks 12 ECE credits, have 5 years to earn 12 credits. e. 12 credit ECE certificate.
4. Program Coordinator	c. BA in human development or related preferred; AA in human development or related field accepted; 30 credits in related field if willing to get on development plan.
5. Center Support Aid/Center Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. AA in ECE or related and experience preferred b. First Aid/CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens, Food Handlers Permit
6. Family Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA in Social Work with focus on ECE. d. AA degree in social work or related.
7. Behavioral Health Specialist	<i>Not specified in detail</i>
8. Nutrition Staff	a. HS Diploma and 1+ years' experience cooking for large groups
9. Bus Driver	a. CDL with passenger enforcement and HS diploma or GED
10. Managers	a. BA; classroom experience preferred. Knowledge, skills, abilities with record keeping, outcomes data, child and family outcomes, standards and quality control.
11. Administrative Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. BA preferred but will work with AA plus experience d. no formal credentials required
12. Supervisors	BA; experience supervising employees or considerable classroom experience

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
 May-August, 2018

Are you finding you are able to hire high quality staff?

No.	
Significantly understaffed/substantial staffing shortage	
Biggest challenge is finding lead teachers and center aids	
Formal education is most lacking in candidates	
Can't afford to put several people through BA degree	
Candidates/employees unwilling to go back to school/go to college	
If help employees meet educational requirements, then they leave for more wages and benefits	
Sites are in crisis mode	
Management staff have to jump into classrooms because of shortages	
Rural, isolated area makes it hard to attract high quality staff	
Struggle to not snap up staff from private child care providers	

What is your experience with turnover of staff? Would you say this is a large concern?

Yes, it's a large concern.	
A lot of turnover in last 2 years.	
In last 2 years have lost many staff to Dept. of Early Learning, school districts, Early Achievers.	
Management staff having to cover classrooms contributes to turnover.	
New staff coming into classrooms (due to growth and turnover) created onboarding demands on center directors; creates more stress, then turnover	
Program b. current year turnover is 50%; past, was 23-25%.	
Program c. turnover is very high in child care side of program.	
Program c. Early Achievers and other requirements have frustrated and overwhelmed assistant teachers, causing turnover.	
Program d. 6 of 8 lead teachers are new.	

What causes staff to stay?

Believe in the mission of Head Start	
Having more autonomy in the classroom, open-ended curriculum	
Working with families, the wrap-around approach	
Really love early childhood education	
Training and professional development opportunities	
Help getting credentials	
In ECEAP, staff like the shorter days plus planning time without the children, breaks	
Staff feels like work is their family.	
Staff like working at a college campus [campus-based program]	
Enjoy working with young children.	
Being supported and getting their questions answered	
Monthly staff meetings	
Coaches coming in to provide extra support.	
Staff moral	
Management style of leadership/supervisor	

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
 May-August, 2018

What reasons do staff give for leaving?

The amount of work and expectations; high degree of responsibility	
Compliance with state requirements	
More money in other jobs, especially in public schools/K-12 classrooms and special education service agencies	
Job is not a good match for personality/nature	
People who have a different outlook [beliefs] about children and behavior (children are not suspended from Head Start)	
Better opportunities once a person gets a degree	
Long days with lack of planning time [child care-based program]	
Retirement	

What staffing challenges, if any, are you facing?

Finding the workers to match our needs – people who are both qualified and a good fit.	
Can't hire some of the parents who would be very good Assistant Teachers or Classroom Aids because they are either undocumented or lack a HS diploma.	
Need bilingual program coordinators but can't find candidates with right combination of skills	
It's been very hard to keep up with state ECEAP growth mandates coupled with teacher shortages	, n=3 ECEAP
Need to support assistant teachers to get the extra training they need; hard to go back to school while working.	
Need to pay assistants wages during training hours.	
Inability to increase wages once training is completed.	
Classrooms are not running because of staffing shortages; [this program] will not reach enrollment mandates because of staffing shortages	
Program a: Head Start requires at least 50% of teachers have BA. Currently meeting this requirement, but barely. Worried next year will not. Program b: Head Start requires at least 50% of teachers have BAs but [this program] is around 30%. By 2020, Head Start will require 100% of teachers with BAs. Not going to make it.	
Stress	
Tight labor market means there are other opportunities for people w/ BAs who like working with children. Everyone is understaffed and competing for the same talent.	
Attracting qualified staff without having to invest a lot of money in professional development	
Not having a sustainable substitute pool; have to rebuild it every year	
Lack of staff diversity; lack of men; lack of dual language teachers (Spanish-English)	

In a perfect world, what would it take to have high quality staff who state in their jobs?

Appropriate expectation of new staff for the environment they're working in	
Wage progression/Compensation	
Workers need to feel supported and valued.	
Need coaches, specialists, good work environment	
Stop discounting good workers who lack college education. Lots of good people w/ HS diploma	
More administrative support	

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
 May-August, 2018

What training or education does your staff need?

Trauma Informed Care	
Family interventions	
Time management skills for the classroom/classroom organization	
Practicum based skills/knowledge about what to expect from children in a Head Start classroom	
Math training for the classroom	
Help keeping up with accelerated expectations for Kindergarten readiness	
15 hours of continuing education (Head Start requirement)	
Unqualified hires need an array of training and education to reach required qualifications	
Creative curriculum development	
Teaching Strategies GOLD	
Motivational interviewing skills	
Early Achievers, environmental rating scales	
Literacy	
How to manage challenging behaviors	
Parent engagement	

Is the needed training readily available?

Yes, in some cases.	
Problem is that some high quality training doesn't get STARS credit. Makes no sense.	
Training is available if willing to take online classes at community college, but otherwise it's a challenge.	
Community is isolated and it's time consuming to travel for trainings.	
Program d. In the school district we have 6 scheduled professional development days and it's still not enough	
Train the trainer models are becoming popular but have not been effective.	
Online modules are accessible. Want more online trainings.	
Online college level certificates and degrees are very accessible.	

What is the biggest professional development need right now?

Trauma Informed Care	
New staff are behind on basics. Need funding to send people to get college credits for employee retention.	
Need funding to pay for release time for training (employee retention)	
Summer practicum would be greatly helpful if staff are on contract during summer (many are not on summer contract)	
Social-emotional challenges and challenging behaviors	
Dual language classrooms – practical training on how to run these classrooms	
Getting classes that count toward college credit in ECE. Example: Classroom set-up and management; Interacting with children in the classroom. Can get STARS credits for these but not college credit.	
Anything to do with Early Achievers and ECEAP Quality Standards	
Racial equity	

Thinking longer term, what do you see as the biggest professional development need a few years down the road?

Trauma Informed Care	
Extreme behavior	
Substance abuse impacts on parents and children	
Credentials: The labor pool needs basic credentials	
Birth-to-3/infant-tot credentials	
Dual language classroom models	
Developmentally appropriate curriculum, including new findings on brain science and ECE	
Working with families	
ACES (Adverse Childhood Events)	
Spanish language speakers who are credentialed to teach in classroom	
Preventing staff burnout	
Valuing people based on their wages [paying people what they're worth]	
Working with English language learners	
Bilingual lead teachers	
Understanding the culture of poverty	

What new or expanded training or certificate programs would be valuable for your workers?

Certificate – Parent engagement/working with families	
Education programs need more content in trauma informed care and dual language classroom models	
New AA in ECE at Grays Harbor College should be helpful	
Special education “endorsement” for early childhood education	
Serving low income families; literacy and numeracy for low income families	

Other comments:

- The housing crisis is another major issue that both teachers and families are facing. People can't do it all. People are making desperate decisions about whether or not they can work, parent, or go to school.
- Parent U Program: Past and current [ECEAP/Head Start] parents provide 42 hours classroom training in 2 hour chunks. 100 hrs practicum. All volunteer. At end, potential to be hired as sub or entry level teaching assistant or classroom aid. Trying to tie it to a CDA in future. 11 participants; 6 hired. Has the potential to be significant with number of families in the program.
- Community U is a WorkSource [WorkFirst?] pilot so they get paid/resources to participate. But participation rates a bit lower [than Parent U]. The advantage of Parent U is that parents are volunteering in own child's classroom and they are very committed. It's also kind of a parent ed program.
- NEED: Need administrative fund to run the program because they don't have direct admin funds
- RE incumbent worker training funds: For new employees – they're working on a 2 year timeframe [to meet minimum credential requirements] and it's very difficult to get through a certificate in a short time frame. It's not useful to have to complete the credential so quickly.
- Of 80 classrooms [ECEAP/Head Start program] there were 28 vacancies that caused 110 eligible children to not be served.
- [ECEAP/Head Start program] currently serving 925 3-4 year olds. Another 1000 3-4 year olds are eligible but not being served. For Early Head Start (birth-3 years old), another 3000 children are likely eligible but not being served. There are no birth-3 services that are child care center-based beyond private pay child care providers for families in poverty. No capacity.
- When new staff onboarding is done well, it helps lower turnover and improve retention.
- Her own staff doesn't have a place to take kids for child care.
- It needs to be a community effort.

Appendix D. Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Qualitative Tabulations
May-August, 2018

- Education programs and scholarships need to be longer and slower – staff can only take one class a quarter. Timelines need to be longer for credential attainment.
- WorkSource OJT was a life saver last year, but need the OJT wages to last longer. A year long or school year long program would be more effective.