

Washington State Early Learning Hiring and Retention Survey

Sarah Clark
Economic Opportunity Institute



About the Economic Opportunity Institute

Founded in 1998, the Economic Opportunity Institute (EOI) is an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit public policy center using research, education and advocacy to advance public policies that promote educational opportunity, good jobs, healthy families and workplaces, and a dignified retirement for all.

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Executive Summary

Ensuring that every child in Washington State has access to in high-quality early childhood education is critical to providing educational opportunity for all children, building family economic security, and promoting a vibrant economy.

In 2018, in response to the growing crisis in the early learning system in Washington State, EOI began investigating how low compensation (including wages and health care benefits) impacts the hiring and retention of early childhood educators and the ability of licensed centers and family homes to provide consistent, high-quality care to children across Washington State. We were concerned about how these factors impacted quality programming and wanted to better understand what the *cost of quality* is for early learning providers.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mean annual income of a childcare worker in 2017 was \$27,800, less than a pet sitter's \$30,120.¹ Reflecting low pay, the yearly turnover rate for the early learning teaching assistants was 43 percent in 2014, the most recent year available.²

To delve further, EOI sent out a survey this year on compensation, health care and turnover to 3,456 of the 5,488 licensed child care centers in Washington. The survey contained 40 questions and 529 respondents – 15.3 percent – filled out a significant portion. The results have a margin of error of 4 to 5 percent, depending on the question, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

Key findings include:

- 51 percent of centers had unfilled positions at the time the survey was completed.³ In the prior week, 62 percent of directors had to cover a classroom because a substitute or other individual was not available.⁴
- 32 percent of programs reported the need to limit their enrollment in the past 2 years due to lack of staff.⁵ An average of 15 children are not being served at each of these centers because of the staff shortages.⁶ Of those that limited enrollment, 63 percent reported that finding qualified staff was a major factor.⁷
- Of the centers that reported that they are considering future expansion, 68 percent are concerned "a great deal" about their ability to find qualified staff.⁸

¹ Washington - May 2017 OES State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates. (2018, March 30). Retrieved August 15, 2018, from https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_wa.htm#39-0000

² Department of Early Learning, 2014 Market Rate Survey: [https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/imported/publications/communications/docs/2015 percent20Market percent20Rate percent20Survey percent20Report percent20Final_SLEDITS.docx](https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/imported/publications/communications/docs/2015%20Market%20Rate%20Survey%20Report%20Final_SLEDITS.docx)

³ Question 7

⁴ Question 21

⁵ Question 10

⁶ Question 11

⁷ Question 5

⁸ Question 15

- 52 percent of respondents indicated it was "harder" or "much harder" to hire quality staff compared to prior years. 13 percent indicated it was "less" or "much less" of a problem.⁹
- 58 percent indicated it was difficult to retain new hires¹⁰, with assistant teachers having the highest turnover rate.¹¹ Twenty-one percent indicated that more than 50 percent of their staff have been with their center/program less than one year.¹²
- Wages are low for the vast majority of staff: According to respondents, 51 percent of new lead teachers make less than \$14/hour. 75 percent of new assistant teachers make less than \$14/hour. 86 percent of aides make less than \$14/hour and 56 percent make less than \$12/hour. 47 percent of family support workers make less than \$14/hour.¹³
- 88 percent indicated that low pay was a major reason it was difficult to hire qualified staff.¹⁴ Also, 61 percent of the directors indicated people resign because of low pay, and 69 percent of the directors indicated that individuals resign because they found better paying work outside of early learning.¹⁵
- Only 47 percent of respondents provide health insurance to all or some of their employees.¹⁶ Of those who provide health insurance, 60 percent provide it only to full-time employees, while 12 percent provide it to all employees.¹⁷ Almost all of those who do not provide health insurance indicated they could not afford to provide it.¹⁸
- 62 percent of centers said they rely on WCCC subsidies for part of their funding.¹⁹

⁹ Question 26

¹⁰ Question 18

¹¹ Question 20

¹² Question 19

¹³ Question 29

¹⁴ Question 16

¹⁵ Question 22

¹⁶ Question 30

¹⁷ Question 31

¹⁸ Question 32

¹⁹ Question 4

Introduction

Washington State has made strides towards improving and supporting the delivery of high-quality early learning, with a commitment to raising standards, increasing access, and investing more funding. However, early childcare education (ECE) workers continue to face financial challenges, both nationally and in Washington State.

According to the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index from UC Berkeley, child care workers fall into the lowest 2nd percentile of total earnings among occupational groups with a bachelor's degree.²⁰ Washington ranks the fourth highest among states in wages for the early childhood workforce, yet still often earn below a living wage. The median hourly wage for ECE workers in Washington was \$12.32 in 2017, 58 percent of the Washington State median wage.

In 2015, Washington's State Legislature passed the Early Start Act,²¹ requiring Washington State to increase access to high-quality early learning.²² Research has shown that quality early learning environments and stable participation in these programs are vital to children's growth, development, and kindergarten readiness. The Early Start Act assists early learning providers to increase quality of care with special emphasis on providing quality care to at-risk children by:

- Continuing to build a child-focused system that supports high-quality services that will improve child outcomes and prioritize early learning services for children who need them most;
- Building upon and strengthening the existing system by making sure it is accessible to all children, families and providers in Washington;
- Using data to drive ongoing policy and programmatic decisions;
- Ensuring seamless services for families, particularly child care and preschool, and are working together to promote high-quality, efficiently-managed services;
- Supporting the early learning workforce in their efforts to provide quality services to children and families through educational support and ongoing training.

Between 2015 and 2017, the state increased the level of financial resources designated to early learning. According to the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index, Washington State was the only state in the U.S. to be rated as "making headway" in the area of financial resources. This includes recording extra Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) spending. The CCDBG grant is a federal grant created in 1990 to help support early care and education for low-income families. Washington reported

²⁰ Whitebook, M., Ph.D., McLean, C., Ph.D., Austin, L. J., Ed.D., & Edwards, B. (n.d.). *2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index* (p. 36, Rep.). Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

²¹ SECOND ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1491. (2015, June 28). Retrieved from http://lawfilesex.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/House_Passed_Legislature/1491-S2.PL.pdf

²² *The Early Start Act 2016 Annual Report* (p. Iv, Rep.) WA: Department of Early learning. https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/2016_ESA_Annual_Report.pdf

ECE spending that exceeded by 15.9 percent the minimum amount required by the federal government.²³

While Washington has made progress in the area of financial resources, it has stalled in the key categories of compensation for the ECE workforce and income supports for families. In compensation, the 2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index noted that Washington fell short by not prioritizing ECE income supports and not providing compensation requirements, compensation guidelines, and stipends or tax credits to supplement early educator’s pay. Because Washington does provide a minimum wage that is above the federal minimum wage, and is adjusted for inflation, the state still ranks relatively high among the states in wages. However, the state falls short in its failure to provide child and dependent care tax credits that helps low-income families – including ECE workers themselves – supplement the large portion of their income that is spent on child care. Washington also does not supply an Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families.²⁴

Methodology

The survey was sent out to 3,456 of the 5,488 licensed child care centers in Washington. We believed we reached a somewhat representative swath of centers, although due to the self-selecting nature of the survey, some may be overrepresented. The average time spent on the survey was 13 minutes and 55 seconds.

The survey was sent out using the survey software Qualtrics. The survey was sent out on April 18, 2018 and was closed on July 11, 2018. The survey contained 40 questions and 529 respondents – 15.3 percent – filled out a significant portion. The results have a margin of error of 4 to 5 percent, depending on the question, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

The survey was sent out to three different types of providers: Head Start/Washington ECEAP, licensed child care centers and family homes.

Head Start is a federal program designed by the United States department of Health and Human Services, which provides early childhood education among many other services the low income families in the United States.²⁵

Early childhood education and assistance program (ECEAP) was created by the Washington State Legislature and the Department of Early Learning, which prepares 3 and 4 year old children from low-income families for success in school and life.²⁶

Family home provider child care is home based childcare where the provider lives in the home where the services are being offered and the hours may not exceed 18 hours per day.²⁷ Licensed

²³ Whitebook, M., Ph.D., McLean, C., Ph.D., Austin, L. J., Ed.D., & Edwards, B. *2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index* (p. 127, Rep.). Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

²⁴ <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2018/06/Early-Childhood-Workforce-Index-2018.pdf> Berkley Early Childhood Workforce Index 2018

²⁵ <https://del.wa.gov/eceap> DEL ECEAP website

²⁶ ECEAP website

²⁷ <http://www.crcwv.org/TypesCare.htm> Childcare Resources website

childcare facilities are places that undergo rigorous inspections and procedure similar to what restaurants go through to become certified.

Survey Questions and Responses

Note: Questions that asked identifying information have been omitted.

Question 1	N	Responses	#	% Responses	
How would you classify your organization?	373	For-Profit Organization	135	36%	
		Non-Profit Organization	109	29%	
		Family Home	52	14%	
		Faith-Affiliated Organization	31	8%	
		ECEAP program	14	4%	
		School District	9	2%	
		Other	23	6%	
Question 2	N	Responses	#	% Responses	
Are you currently participating in Early Achievers?	391	Yes	326	83%	
		No	65	17%	
Question 3	N	Responses	#	% Responses	
(If Yes to 2) What is your current Early Achievers rating?	322	One	0	0%	
		Two	50	16%	
		Three	155	48%	
		Four	39	12%	
		Five	0	0%	
		I have multiple centers with different ratings	12	4%	
Participating - not yet rated	66	20%			
Question 4	N	Responses	#	% Responses	% Respondents
What are your sources of funding?	361	WCCC Subsidy	223	32%	62%
		Parent tuition	296	42%	82%
		ECEAP	55	8%	15%
		Head Start	33	5%	9%
		Title I	8	1%	2%
		Other	86	12%	24%
Question 5	N	Responses	#	\bar{X}	% Responses
What is the approximate number of children who are currently enrolled?	364	Full/Extended Day	19,384	52.4	58%
		Part-Day	9,430	25.5	28%
		Other	4,450	12.0	13%
Question 6	N	Responses	#	\bar{X}	% Responses
What is the approximate the number of staff?	370	Lead Teachers	2,341	6.3	36%
		Assistant Teachers	2,275	6.1	35%
		All other staff	1,978	5.3	30%
Question 7	N	Responses	#	% Responses	
At the current time, do you have any unfilled positions?	529	Yes	271	51%	
		No	258	49%	
Question 8	N	Responses	#	% Responses	
(If Yes to 7) How many positions are unfilled?	258	Lead Teacher	262	38%	
		Assistant Teacher	267	39%	
		Family Support Staff	44	6%	
		Aide	120	17%	

Question 9	N	Responses	#	%
Have you had to limit the enrollment in your center/program in the past year or two because you could not find enough staff to conduct the program?	524	Yes	167	32%
		No	357	68%
Question 10	N	#	\bar{X}	
(If Yes to 9) How many children are not being served because of your staff shortages?	112	1,620	14.5	
Question 11	N	Responses	#	%
(If Yes to 9) Is finding individuals who meet the required qualifications the major factor in limiting enrollment?	126	Yes	80	63%
		No	20	16%
		Not Sure	12	10%
		Other	14	11%
Question 12	N	Responses	#	%
Have staff shortages impacted the quality of your program in serving children and families?	485	Yes	259	53%
		No	120	25%
		Not sure	76	16%
		Other	30	6%
Question 13	N			
Please provide at least one example of how the quality of your program is impacted.	300			

Selected Responses:

- “I cannot find qualified teachers so I have to settle for inexperienced people with no education.”
- “Current staff is working longer hours, handling more tasks, and being less available to children. Stress levels for all are increased, including staff and children.”
- “Current teachers are over-worked and unable to take time off because there is no one to take their class. This leads to stressed teachers and a stressed teacher is not a happy teacher or a happy classroom!”
- “Had to let two children go because staff did not have skills to handle the children while maintaining quality care for all the children”
- “Not providing lessons, only covering basic needs: toileting and eating.”
- “Part-time workers to fill-in are very hard to find and good quality people want more money and benefits.”
- “It used to be when we had positions opened there would be an ample number of qualified candidates who would apply, and we could choose from the pool the most highly skilled / competent candidates. Today, our advertisements often end with NO qualified candidates applying, or a limited few. We have been forced to go into long-term sub situations or hiring employees that have potential and putting them on daunting provisionally hired plans, which lead to other problems. Bottom line is classrooms are moving forward with less than ideal or highly skilled teachers.”
- “I have never had a person that is educated in early learning ever apply for a position in my Child Care Center.”
- “It is getting very difficult to tell staff they need a degree or education, and then barely be able to pay them minimum wage. They make a fraction of school teachers.”

- “Health care and low wages. Other than those two things, our employees would love to stay with us. Supporting our teachers is our biggest priority.”
- “I fill in the classroom every day. I cannot afford to replace the last person that left. I plan on closing for a better paying job for myself. Less hours and stress.”
- “I feel it is crucial to ease the financial burden that early learning staff face. It is impossible to keep good staff when they can make the same pay flipping burgers and not being hit or kicked or changing diapers.”

Question 14	N	Responses	#	%	
As you plan for the future, are you considering expanding your enrollment?	503	Yes	182	36%	
		No	171	34%	
		Maybe	150	30%	
Question 15	N	Responses	#	%	
(If Yes to 14) To what extent are you concerned about your ability to hire qualified staff?	178	A Great Deal	121	68%	
		Moderately	40	22%	
		A little	15	8%	
		None at all	2	1%	
Question 16	N	Responses	#	% Responses	% Respondents
Based on your conversations with candidates and other individuals who might be interested in working with young children, in your professional opinion why is it difficult to hire qualified staff? (Choose three)	486	The pay is too low	430	40%	88%
		Health insurance is not available/inadequate	206	19%	42%
		Education requirements needed are too onerous	203	19%	42%
		Too Demanding	171	16%	35%
		Contributions to retirement are not available/inadequate	37	3%	8%
		Vacation and sick leave are not available/inadequate	31	3%	6%
Question 17	N				
If there is anything else you like to share with us about recruiting and hiring early learning staff, please do so.	219				

Selected Responses:

- “I’m concerned that the proposed WAC’s seem to have a future date that would no longer allow for centers to consider applicants who don’t already have a WA state Initial ECE certificate.”
- “A higher level of expectations have changed when Early Achiever’s came into the picture. Also the low amount of money is paid to child care professionals and some choose to leave the business altogether.”
- “Due to the minimum wage in Seattle, people are able to find work that’s less stressful outside of the early learning field. The changing (higher) educational requirements make it difficult to find candidates that have the needed experience combined with educational requirements.”
- “Early Achievers has raised the bar for Washington State Childcare programs and the soon to be implemented WACs will expand the higher expectations to all centers. We need a way to pay higher wages in order to attract and maintain quality staff. The Stackable Certificate - Early Achiever’s Grant is a great start to better educate quality staff. Now we just need a way to increase wages without bankrupting our families!”

- “For someone to start working in the field of ECE there are a lot of requirements in the beginning. We allow our staff to do their training during children nap times but I wished the 30 hours of training would be divided to be fine throughout the first year of employment so that the new staff does not get bombarded with so much training at once. It should start with health and safety and go on with the other necessary topics in the next quarter. It is also hard to have a childcare center in Renton and people will drive to Bellevue or Seattle to make more money. It would be great to have a certain amount of pay for staff who is inexperienced regardless what area people work in. We can't pay \$15 for someone who has no experience.”
- “Hiring a qualified staff has been real challenging, the candidate either have a degree or they lack the experience to assist in a qualified program. Often times, people look for a job in this field without really knowing the breath of the work and dedication.”
- “I have several staff members that would be willing to go back to school for their Early Childhood Education degree, especially with the Early Achievers scholarship available to them. However, they don't want to go back to school for such a small pay increase. Likewise, we cannot high teachers with credentials for the same reason. The ones we do find end up leaving us quickly for a center with better pay and benefits. We can't offer that with no wage ladder or other compensation. Some months we're barely able to make payroll as it is.”
- “In Seattle it is extremely challenging to recruit and retain teachers as they can often gain entry level tech positions that pay several dollars more an hour to start. The cost of living makes it nearly impossible for single teachers to work in ECE without a second income or roommate/partner/spouse to share the cost of living expenses.”
- “Low pay is the biggest issue, but additionally the amount of challenging behaviors without adequate mental health/behavior consultation/training for staff is impacting teacher's desire to commit to early learning as a career.”
- “My income is not great enough to pay for a part time staff person. When myself or my assistant is sick, we have to close my whole child care down. Also, as a level 3 early achievers participant, I no longer have access to the substitute pool so that I can further my rating score. Tying to hire someone with the new education requirements for minimum wage is absolutely impossible and I foresee myself having to lover my capacity in an already started county, when my assistant decides to retire which will further hurt the families that I will no longer be able to care for.”
- “STATE SUBSIDIES ARE TOO LOW. We cannot place the burden on private pay families. Washington State has varied economies. Over here in the East side of the State, we are not Seattle. It's a different economic setting.”

Question 18	N	Responses	#	%
After you hire staff, do you have difficulty retaining them?	467	Yes	272	58%
		No	195	42%
Question 19	N	Responses	#	%
What percentage of your staff have worked less than one year at your center or program?	463	More than 75%	35	8%
		More than 50% up to 75%	58	13%
		More than 25% up to 50%	100	22%
		10%-25%	114	25%
		Less than 10%	156	34%

Question 20	N	Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7
Rank these position in order of their turnover rate, with 1 having the highest attrition rate. (Note: "Other" responses with no written answer at the top of the scale have been excluded.)	390	Lead Teacher	104	69	73	127	15	2	0
		Assistant Teacher	104	135	114	31	4	1	1
		Breaker/Floater	103	99	107	64	7	6	4
		Aide	56	71	75	138	35	7	8
		Other	23	17	20	30	6	5	4

Question 21	N	Responses	#	%
In the past week, have you had to cover a classroom for a lead teacher because you could not find a substitute or other individual to cover the class?	451	Yes	279	62%
		No	172	38%

Question 22	N	Responses	#	%	%
When individuals resign, what are their stated reasons for doing so? (Top three choices)	452	Found a better paying job outside of early learning	312	27%	69%
		Pay is too low	276	24%	61%
		Found a better paying job in another center	150	13%	33%
		Want/need better health	119	10%	26%
		Want to spend more time with family/children	66	6%	15%
		Working conditions are not satisfactory	51	4%	11%
		Want/need better retirement benefits	51	4%	11%
		Are retiring	40	3%	9%
Other	98	8%	22%		

Question 23	N
If there is anything else you would like to share with us about retaining early learning staff, please do so.	134

Selected Responses:

- “Wonderful staff members leave because they need to work 2-3 jobs to make ends meet”
- “We stress/burn out teachers as we try to do everything demanded by DEL and the thought of new WACs with crazy rules is driving staff away.”
- “With the low rates for DSHS we are currently having to limit the amount of those clients that we can provide care for. With the continued minimum wages increases of the next several years, it may be difficult to stay in business.”
- “We are constantly improving and making changes. This puts stress on the staff because they must do more curriculum and projects, etc. However their compensation does not change. I do my best to show appreciation which makes my turnover rate less than other day cares but I feel like it is a house of cards and a staff member could quit at any moment.”
- “There should be more ways to meet the new DEL BA standards---weighing experience, lifelong learning, etc.”
- “Teacher to child ratios are terrible. It’s exhausting work. If there were the resources to have less children, more staff, teaching staff wouldn't burn out as quickly. If daycare staff had summer or winter breaks, that would help with the constant exhaustion that typically occurs in this field.”
- “Please bring back the wage ladder.”

- “Once they get a BA they move to the school district - very hard to keep teachers with a BA in early learning other than school districts.”
- “Low pay has forced me to hire people who are inadequately prepared to work with children beyond the most basic level. We are keeping kids safe but risking their long term ability to learn. Teachers that are uneducated and have had poor upbringing are not able to interact with children and facilitate higher level thinking and activities. Being inadequately prepared to work in ECE creates people that quit after short periods from frustration or burnout. We can't keep the quality teachers for lack of pay and benefits and we can't keep the low level staff because they are not equipped to deal with the challenges presented in a classroom setting.”
- “FCC in Pierce County based on the required minimum wage the subsidy rate does not allow for us to pay a decent wage with benefits; in additions, one of the unintended consequences of the Early Achiever program is the education benefits which pushes many qualified staff to agencies and schools giving many FCC and centers sub-par assistance or their longevity is limited to when they can get a better paying position elsewhere. We really do not have an incentive to keep them.”

Question 24	N	Responses	#	%
How would you describe your ability to hire and retain quality staff?	451	We are in "crisis mode"	42	9%
		We are "struggling but getting by"	251	56%
		We are doing "fine"	158	35%
Question 25	N	Responses	#	%
Have you been involved in hiring staff at the same early learning center or program during the past two or more years?	449	Yes	341	76%
		No	108	24%
Question 26	N	Responses	#	%
(If Yes to 25) How would you describe your ability to hire quality staff this year compared to prior years?	339	Much less of a problem	24	7%
		Less of a problem	22	6%
		About the same	114	34%
		Harder	113	33%
		Much harder	66	19%
Question 27	N	Responses	#	%
Does the diversity of your staff reflect the diversity of the children you serve?	445	Yes	325	73%
		No	120	27%
Question 28	N			
Are there specific actions that could be taken by the State of Washington to better ensure that they do?	40			

Selected Responses:

- “Comprehensive funding for state subsidies would allow more diversity in families attending schools with higher tuition. Higher tuition is needed to fund decent ratios, benefits and a wage at which we can hire and retrain staff.
- “Consider educational equivalencies including experience that acknowledge that college education as the sole gateway through which teachers must pass in order to prove their quality is inherently racist and leads to a workforce overly representative of dominant culture.”

- “I think just by having better pay and better vacation we can attract more candidates.”
- “Getting more POC involved in early learning programs by reducing the cost of said programs or paying for them.”
- “Wow this is a hard one. We are fortunate to be able to give benefits but those costs are rising exponentially so curbing health care costs so more funds can go towards salaries may contribute. General support for EC college training may help. Finding people of color has been difficult for us.”
- “We need help with paying a livable wage to people so they are interested in working with us.”

Question 29	N	Responses	Lead Teacher	Assistant	Aide	Family Support				
What is the current hourly compensation for new hires who do not have prior experience but meet the minimum education requirements?	369	Salary Ranges	#	%	#	%	#	%		
		≥\$20	15	4%	0	0%	1	1%	8	11%
		\$19 to <\$20	4	1%	1	0%	0	0%	2	3%
		\$18 to <\$19	28	8%	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%
		\$17 to <\$18	20	6%	4	1%	0	0%	10	14%
		\$16 to <\$17	21	6%	16	5%	5	3%	5	7%
		\$15 to <\$16	37	11%	36	11%	15	8%	6	8%
		\$14 to <\$15	39	12%	27	8%	6	3%	7	10%
		\$13 to <\$14	53	16%	39	12%	17	9%	8	11%
		\$12 to <\$13	109	33%	59	18%	39	21%	7	10%
<\$12	9	3%	151	45%	104	56%	17	24%		

Question 30	N	Responses	#	%
Do you provide some or all of your employees with health insurance?	414	Yes	196	47%
		No	218	53%

Question 31	N	Responses	#	%
(If Yes to 30) If so, which employees receive it?	194	All employees	23	12%
		Only full-time employees	116	60%
		Part-time employees who work more than 20 hours/week	23	12%
		Other	32	16%

Question 32	N
(If No to 30) Please explain why you do not provide your employees with health insurance.	200

Selected Responses:

- “B/c expensive. I would then have to increase prices.”
- “Once again MONEY! Private owner, small center, do I need to go on?”
- “Too expensive. Most of our employees other than managers qualify for state benefits or get insurance through their spouse.”
- “We only have 7 employees. We do provide a \$200 per month health care stipend to all employees.”
- “A decade ago I was the only one in my entire county providing medical insurance for my childcare center staff. After the OBAMA mess it became ridiculously expensive and covered NOTHING due to huge deductibles!!!!!!”
- “We're a nonprofit raising a tuition shortfall of \$75k per year already. Thank goodness for Obama Care!”
- “Cannot find an insurance that we can afford.”
- “FUNDING!!!”

- “Not enough participation to qualify for an affordable group plan.”
- “Most are covered through Indian Health.”
- “Cannot afford it until this is recognized as a real profession.”
- “I used to, but it got too expensive. As FCC there is one to two staff members, so there is no group rate.”
- “Center owner does not want to.”
- “I don't even provide myself with insurance.”
- “Cost is way too high.”

Question 33	N	Responses	#	%
Do you give your employees raises?	419	Yes	338	81%
		No	81	19%
Question 34	N	Responses	#	%
(If Yes to 33) Under what conditions do you give your employee a raise? (Could choose multiple)	327	Been with center/program for more than a year	221	40%
		Got a higher degree or a certification	202	37%
		Received an increase in subsidy rates	35	6%
		Other	92	17%
Question 35	N			
(If No to 33) Please explain why you do not provide your employees with raises.	71			

Selected Responses:

- “Can't afford to.”
- “I can't afford an employee my family members are the assistant helpers and I am only paid roughly 3 dollars an hour for all ages!!!! Extremely wrong with all the state is requiring of us especially not having teacher degrees and not being a teacher. If needing regular schooling the children need to be in head start and then school. Prior to this songs, games and fun while teaching them daily functions and interacting about different happenings throughout the day should be adequate!!!”
- “I haven't in the last 3 years since it has been mandated, previously I would.”
- “Minimum wage has gone up so much in the past few years that it is the only raise I can provide. Our enrollment is 85-90% subsidy and we are a small locally owned center.”
- “My husband and I share the income. In the past I have given employees raises. But it is hard and always cuts into our income. Plus have to pay Medicare and social security. They deserve it and more but they wind up making more than I do.”
- “Our center is in a low income community and the subsidies do not allow for it. We are barely surviving. I would love to give raises. As owner/director, I have taken a cut in pay and benefits to be able to keep up with the increasing minimum wage requirements.”
- “The state has mandated any pay raises that we would have been able to give.”

- “We bump everyone's rate of pay up in Jan to coincide with Minimum Wage changes. These jumps are so high each year we cannot afford to do additional merit raises. Even without minimum wage increases, giving raises would require us to raise tuition and this affects our enrollment and we are already very expensive. To give raises without raising tuition, we would have to cut in other areas like food or classroom supplies, which we will not do.”
- “The owners of our center don't allow us to.”

Question 36	N	Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	%
What are the three largest costs of quality of your center?	359	Wages	292	40	13	96%
		Healthcare Benefits	10	98	43	42%
		Facility Costs	27	127	101	71%
		Implementation of WACs	5	32	58	26%
		Early Achievers	18	22	54	26%
		Classroom Materials	6	29	73	30%
		Other	1	11	17	8%
Question 37	N					
What recommendations do you have for the DEL Early Learning Workforce Compensation Workgroup to attract and retain individuals and increase diversity in the early learning profession?	214					

Selected Responses:

- “‘Sign on bonus’ to cover new-hire minimum qualification requirements. DEL Co-op for health care so that centers with only a few employees can have access to group rates. Increased subsidy rates so that we can afford to pay employees more (and at least MEET the actual cost of services provided!)”
- “A better system for reviewing out of country credentials/schooling; DEL needs to provide that service at a cost that is affordable to those in the field. A \$500 fee to translate and determine is out of reach for many who are out of work.”
- “A federal government policy. Health care for childcare workers. Maybe for childcare workers to be able to join the state system. Simplify the rules and regulations and early achievers to attract more interested people. Continue the commitment for better education.”
- “Better pay to keep qualified workers. It’s mandated for certain positions to have degrees but the pay is low.”
- “Consistent salary scale for required positions.”
- “Diversity? At this point who cares about diversity? If we can't balance the cost of employees with rates for care. It little matters how diverse we are if we can't afford to keep our doors open? Personally I am tired of making sacrifices to keep going. Strengthening families? Does anyone care about mine?”
- “Find some type of funding to pay teachers appropriately so that quality isn’t based on parents’ ability to pay.”
- “For those that take subsidies, they need to be increased.”
- “Free bus passes could make it easier for staff to travel to sites outside of the city.”

- “Higher subsidy for higher wages or something similar to the wage ladder.”
- “It would be great if they could compensate the required classes that teachers need to take other than STARS. For example, CPR and First Aid, Blood-borne Pathogens, Food Handlers, etc.”
- “More available income for Centers--as a private center I know parents cannot bear the costs if we have to keep raising them because we are being taxed out of business by regulations. However we do want the best we can provide for our families.”
- “We need something akin to the wage ladder in place that we can use to hire qualified and diversified staff. We need to have some kind of incentive at our disposal for teachers that wish to further their education as well. At this point, whenever teachers increase their education they immediately begin looking for a center that can compensate them for that education. This hurts not only us, but the children we serve. We need those qualified educators within our facility. Even our teachers without education but with a great deal of experience (10 yrs.+) are now leaving for better paying jobs. If we could offer them better wages to obtain their degree and stay with us I'm sure they would.”