

# Staff Turnover in the Early Childhood Workforce

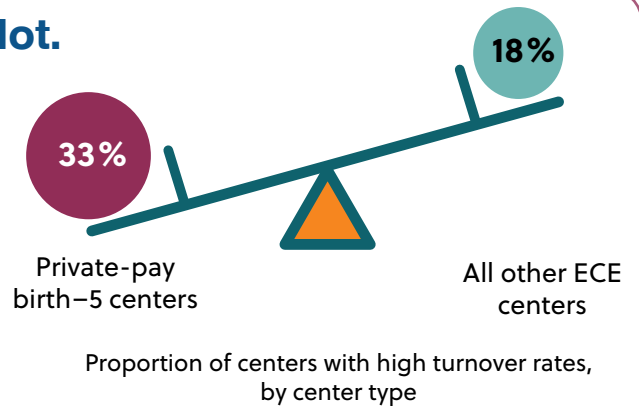
## WHAT FACTORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Turnover is a pressing problem in today’s early childhood education (ECE) centers. Turnover among early childhood educators affects ECE quality<sup>1</sup> and has been linked to weakened language and social development in children birth to age five.<sup>2</sup> This infographic highlights findings from a recent study<sup>3</sup> that analyzes data<sup>4</sup> from a nationally representative sample of ECE centers and the center-based provider workforce.

### Children’s ages and who pays matter a lot.

Staff turnover rates at centers serving children birth to age 5 were **almost double** the turnover rate among staff in centers serving children ages 3–5.

Of all childcare center types, **private-pay centers\* serving children birth to 5** had the highest staff turnover. Almost twice as many of these centers had high turnover rates compared to **all other ECE centers**. This still held true even after accounting for wages and other factors.



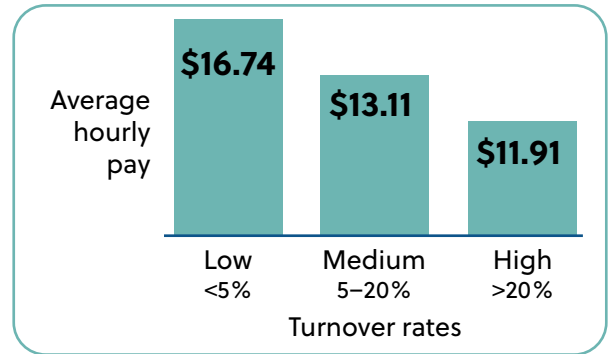
### To what extent do wages and benefits matter?



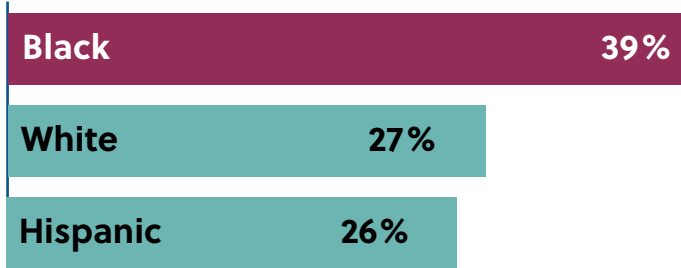
Across all centers, **higher wages** were associated with **lower levels** of turnover.



**Nonwage benefits** such as health, retirement, training, and professional development were largely **unrelated** to centers’ turnover patterns.



### Black educators were more likely than their peers to work in low-wage centers.



Percentage of educators working in low-wage centers, by race

**39% of Black educators** worked in low-wage centers, whereas only **27% of white educators** and **26% of Hispanic educators** worked in low-wage centers.

Although this study analyzed data from 2012, this disparity persists: The *2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index* found that Black early childhood educators are paid \$0.78 less per hour on average than white educators.<sup>5</sup>

To read the full report: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectId=4633>

\*See next page for definitions of key terms.

## A Note About this Infographic

Members of the REL Northeast & Islands Early Childhood Workforce Development Research Alliance wanted to better understand which center-level factors were associated with early childhood workforce turnover to inform policy and program guidance for ECE centers.

This infographic highlights findings from the resulting study, [Center- and Program-Level Factors Associated with Turnover in the Early Childhood Education Workforce](#), published by the Institute of Education Sciences.

## Key Terms

**High turnover:** Centers are identified as having high turnover when the proportion of teachers who left their positions exceeded 20 percent in the year the survey was conducted (2012).

**Free centers:** In the NSECE, centers are coded as receiving payment from some or all families, receiving payment from no families, or don't know. Free centers receive payment from no families.

**Low turnover:** Centers are identified as having low turnover when the proportion of teachers who left their positions was below 5 percent in the year the survey was conducted (2012).

**Private-pay center:** In the NSECE, centers are coded as receiving payment from some or all families, receiving payment from no families, or don't know. Private-pay centers receive payment from some or all families.

**Turnover:** This refers to the proportion of educators who left their respective centers in the last 12 months.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Hale-Jinks, C., Knopf, H., & Kemple, K. (2006). Tackling teacher turnover in childcare: Understanding causes and consequences, identifying solutions. *Childhood Education*, 82(4), 219–226.
- <sup>2</sup> Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1989). *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America*. Final report: National Child Care Staffing Study. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.
- <sup>3</sup> Caven, M., Khanani, N., Zhang, X., & Parker, C. (2021). *Center- and program-level factors associated with early childhood workforce turnover*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands.
- <sup>4</sup> NSECE Project Team (National Opinion Research Center). (2017). *National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), 2012*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.
- <sup>5</sup> McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., & Olson, K.L. (2021). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2020*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://csce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/>.