

## Early Childhood Education Workforce

***Vision:** The early childhood workforce is valued as a vital part of Maine's education system and economy. By 2030, establish a public funding mechanism to ensure that jobs in child care programs include benefits and competitive wages, commensurate with experience and credentials/degrees, reflecting the importance of the work.*



### DATA

- Maine has experienced a 19% decrease in the number of child care educators since 2019. [Data](#)
- 58% of Maine child care centers surveyed in 2021 reported being understaffed. [Data](#)
- The number of family child care providers in Maine has dropped 27.5% since 2010. [Data](#)
- Maine early educators with a bachelor's degree are paid 25% less than their colleagues in the K-8 system. [Data](#)
- The poverty rate for early educators in Maine is 16.5%, much higher than for Maine workers in general (9.4%) and 8.3 times as high as for K-8 teachers (2%). [Data](#)
- 41% of programs responding the Maine 2021 Child Care Market Rate survey reported offering health insurance packages. [Data](#)
- 62.7% of centers responding to the Maine 2021 Child Care Market Rate survey reported offering paid sick/personal leave averaging 8 paid days. [Data](#)
- 15.2% of family child care programs responding to the Maine 2021 Child Care Market Rate survey reported offering paid sick/personal leave averaging 4 paid days. [Data](#)



### STATUS

- Through federal Covid-19 relief funding, Maine has offered \$2,000 start up grants for family child care providers and \$200 per child care educator per month from Oct. 2021 through Oct. 2022.
- Child care programs and educators now enroll in Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network to assist in tracking workforce data.
- MaineAEYC in partnership with OCFS offers scholarships through the T.E.A.C.H. National Scholarship Program for Early Childhood Educators.



## 2022 Goals

Early childhood education workforce bill will be passed, funded, and signed into law. It will:

- Dedicate federal and state funding to the early childhood workforce, since the recruitment, retention, health, and quality of the ECE workforce is the foundation of a strong child care system
- Fund wage support through direct payments in monthly installments to child care programs, and begin using contracts with child care programs to formalize this system and start to integrate it with cost modeling and CCSP (child care subsidy program)
- Increase funding for, and help create, career pathways including CTEs and high school connections to the field, apprenticeships, scholarships for degrees, and expanded articulation agreements to include Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network credentialing and training. Part of this process will include creating a way for professionals to show competencies and skills achieved through training and experience through credit for prior learning
- Commission a group to explore best practices and funding needed for workplace benefits for child care teachers and staff, with completed report and report back due to Legislature by 2023
- Ensure consistent and timely collection of child care data with annual report backs to the Legislature. Biennial workforce studies and child care program cost modeling (including a link to a salary scale) to begin in 2022. An annual process of child care data collection to be in place by 2023, including the number of children enrolled in each program by age and race/ethnicity



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## 2023–2024 Goals

- Implement regional or statewide employment benefits model for licensed child care programs
- Finish developing articulation and career pathways plan for Maine.
- Implement marketing campaign to market early care and education jobs and career pathways to become an early educator (high school students, CTEs, mid life career changes, parents)
- Implement cost modeling for child care that includes alignment with a workforce salary scale to replace market rate surveys in determining the amount of public funding to support families and the ECE workforce
- Scale up child care contracts between government and licensed child care programs to reach 50% of licensed programs



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## 2025–2026 Goals

- Career pathways plan is implemented in Maine with credit for prior learning options, higher education credit earned for CDAs and MRTQ PDN credentials, aligned courses and programs at all community colleges, and aligned courses and programs at all UMaine locations
- Full system of public funding for child care/preschool through direct contracts with licensed child care programs begins. Contracts are scaled up so that all licensed child care programs and early educators in Maine have access to the new system of public funding
- Local, state and federal funding are braided to ensure that no family pays more than 7% of their income for infant and toddler care, that preschoolers are fully publicly funded, and that early childhood professionals are compensated in accordance with their skills, competencies, and experience
- With federal legislation, 90% of child care programs opt into program of publicly funding child care and preschool, with new wage ladder and benefits

