



POLICY NOTE: Pay Gap in Early Childhood Education

BACKGROUND

- The first five years in a child’s life are the most important for brain development and are critical for setting the foundation for a healthy and successful life.
- High-quality early childhood education (ECE) is paramount for the 14.8 million children under age 6 with both parents working and the 11.3 million children under age 6 who live in poverty.
- High quality ECE teachers are critical to creating quality ECE experiences for young children.
- Recent data from the U.S. Department of Education shows that ECE teachers are chronically underpaid nationally and here in Ohio.

MEDIAN ANNUAL SALARY: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS V. OTHER OCCUPATIONS

	Ohio	National Level
Elementary School Teachers	\$59,620	\$54,890
Kindergarten Teachers	\$52,470	\$51,640
Preschool Teachers	\$23,690	\$28,570
Infant/Toddler Teachers	\$19,860	\$20,320
Parking Lot Attendants	\$19,190	\$20,630
Manicurist & Pedicurist	\$19,140	\$20,820

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *High quality early learning settings depend on a high-quality workforce*. Washington, DC: Author.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Compensation for early childhood educators—including infant, toddler, and preschool teachers—must be equitable for the work they are doing on behalf of families and society as a whole.
 - Models for enhancing early childhood educators’ pay can be derived from states and cities, including Vermont, New York City, and the District of Columbia, who are moving towards paying ECE teachers on the same pay scale as elementary school teachers.
- Any ECE expansion at the local and state level needs to sufficiently support equitable pay for ECE educators. Absent that, the quality of our young children’s educational experiences risks being compromised.

AUTHORSHIP

Mihaiela R. Gugiu, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist, CCEC
CCEC Policy Committee (Laura Justice Ph.D., Mihaiela R. Gugiu, Ph.D., Kelly Purtell, Ph.D., Elaine Joy, M.A., Alexandria Hamilton, B.A.)