



Edward Street Child Services  
Providing advocacy, resources and support to early  
childhood educators and the children they serve.



# Worcester Center Based Early Education and Care

## Salary and Benefits Survey



February 2008

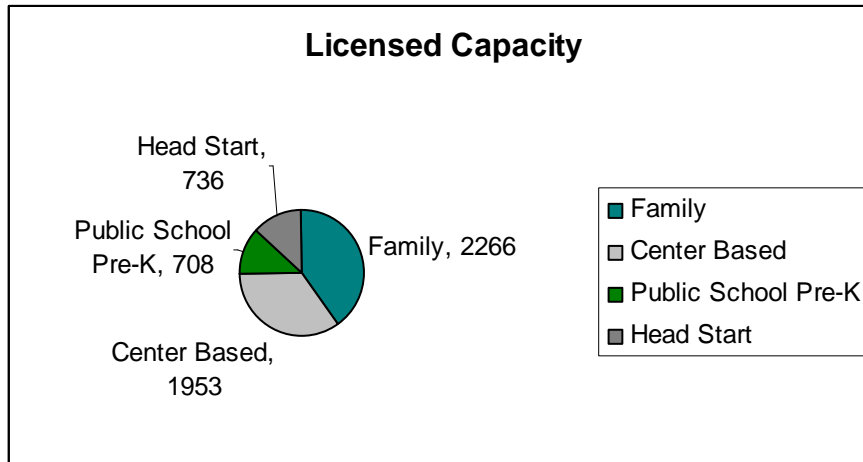
## Introduction

Early childhood education programs in the city of Worcester are committed to providing high quality programming for the children in their care. Centers have embraced the new National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards including the increased educational requirements for staff. Our teachers have enrolled in classes and are working toward their degrees. The scholarship program offered by the Department of Early Education and Care has increased each year, and each year has been exhausted.

This is good news for children and families. But what does it mean for centers? Are they going to lose highly qualified staff to the public schools where staff work fewer hours per day for far fewer days per year for significantly higher salaries? Will they be in competition with each other to recruit and retain qualified staff?

Edward Street Child Services conducted this salary and benefits survey to assist agencies as they struggle with balancing quality and affordability. Increasing quality requires increasing costs. These costs, however, cannot be passed on to families. Without subsidies, early childhood education can easily cost a third of a working family's income

## The Local Landscape



Total Children Under 5:  
**11,142**

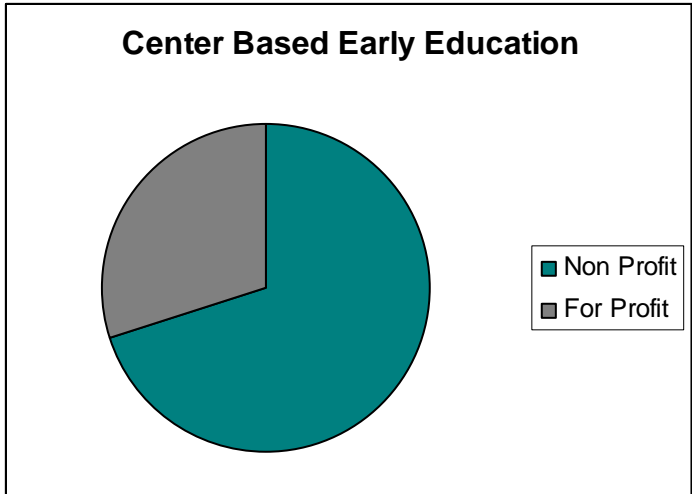
Estimated Children in  
Out of Home Care:  
**7800**

Total Capacity:  
**5663**

**Average Annual Cost of Infant Care: \$12,735.00**

**Average Annual Cost of Preschool Care \$9,100.00**

**Annual Cost of Worcester State College: \$5,539.00**



The staff survey was sent to the Center Based subset of the early childhood education system in Worcester.

Of the 31 centers in Worcester contacted for this survey, 9 are for-profit and 22 are not-for-profit organizations.

Center based programs serve 1,953 children.

### Methodology

The survey was sent to 31 Center Based Early Childhood Education Programs in the City of Worcester. Twenty four centers responded [77%]. The results reflect a cross-section of the early childhood community. Large non-profit organizations operating a variety of human service programs, small for-profit organizations, and large centers providing only childcare responded.

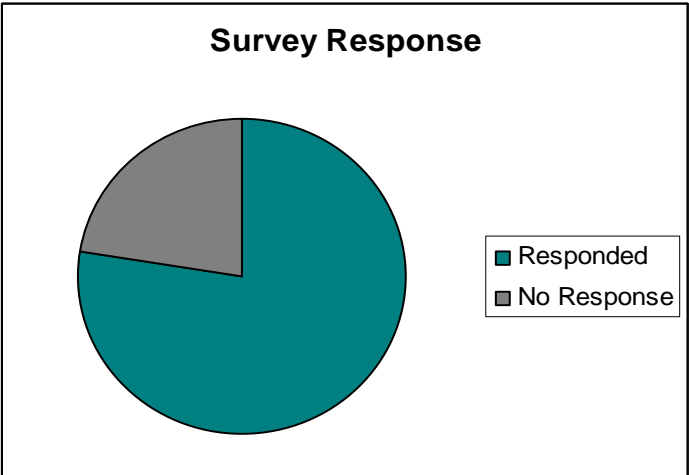
Total Full Time Staff Included in Survey:  
**505**

Total Part Time Staff Included in Survey:  
**311**

Total Full Time Women:  
**482**

Total Part Time Women:  
**266**

Women make up 95% of full time staff and 85.5% of part time staff



Not all respondents answered all questions. Additionally, due to the variety of staffing patterns and services provided, certain items were not relevant to all organizations. For example, only 5 responding organizations employ kitchen workers. Several do not employ teacher’s aides.

Massachusetts sets the following criteria for educators working in a group child care setting:

### Summary of Qualifications

| To Be A:            | You Need:<br>Education and   | Work Experience   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>Teacher</b>      | 3 credits in Child Development   | 9 months of work experience   |
| <b>Lead Teacher</b> | <i>Teacher requirements plus:</i><br>9 credits in Early Childhood Education  | <i>A Total of:</i><br>36 months of experience if you have a high school diploma<br>27 months of experience if you have a certificate<br>18 months of experience if you have an Associate degree<br>9 months of experience if you have a bachelor degree |
| <b>Director I</b>   | <i>Lead teacher Requirements plus:</i><br>2 credits in Day Care Administration<br>2 credits in Early Childhood Education | <i>Lead teacher requirements plus:</i><br>6 months as a lead teacher  |
| <b>Director II</b>  | <i>Director I requirements plus:</i><br>2 credits in other Administration Topics   | No additional work experience   |

Research shows that better-educated preschool teachers with specialized training are more effective: the more education teachers have, the more they exemplify positive attitudes and knowledge about early childhood education, translating into more productive and comfortable learning environments for children. Conversely, research shows that low educational qualifications and a lack of specific preparation in preschool limit the educational effectiveness of many preschool teachers. Nationally, disadvantaged children have less access to high-quality teachers, even though they may benefit the most from teacher quality.

Increasingly, there is agreement that preschool teachers should have a four-year college degree and specialized training in early education. Teachers with these qualifications have warmer and more responsive interactions with children, are better at constructing and individualizing lesson plans, provide richer language and cognitive experiences, and are less authoritarian. Children taught by well educated teachers learn literacy and language skills that lay the foundation for reading and concepts fundamental to mathematical and scientific thinking. They also learn to listen, pay attention, ask questions, and follow classroom instructions.

**“If compensation doesn’t get worked out, all we’re going to be doing is training people to be good kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers.”**

Marcy Whitebook  
Early Childhood  
Education Researcher



From: Early Learning Research Characteristics of High Quality Early Learning Program: A Summary of Research; Washington Department of Education

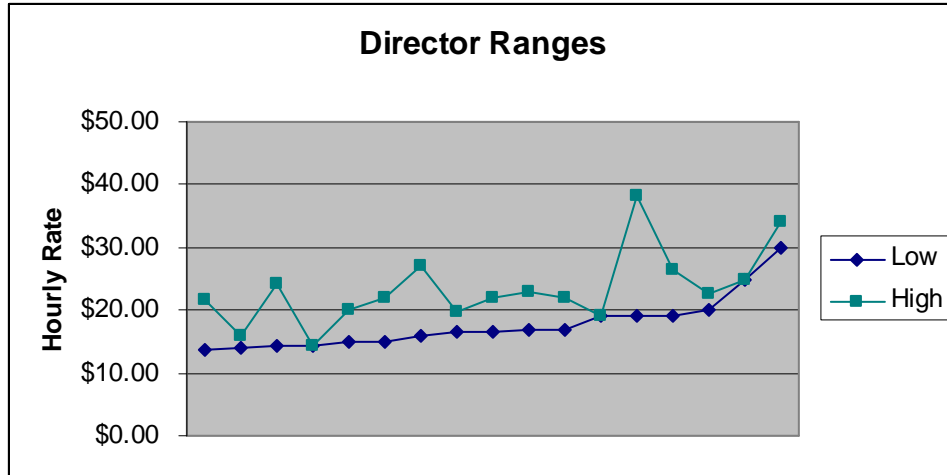
The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has recently raised its standards. The qualifications for teachers will require Baccalaureate degrees. The following is the timeline established by NAEYC for centers seeking accreditation:

### Timeline for Meeting Teacher Qualifications 2006-2020

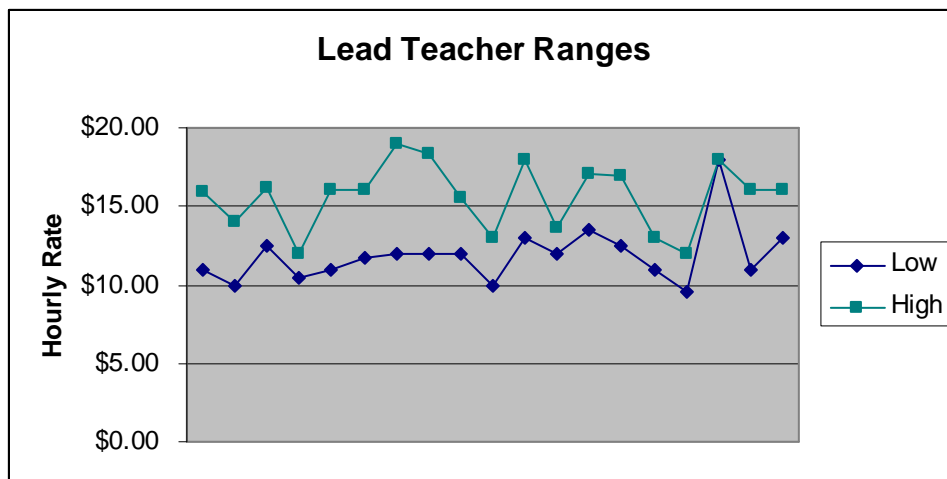
| Year        | 1 class/1 teacher  | 2 classes/2 teachers   | 3 classes/3 teachers   | 4 or more classrooms  |
|-------------|--|--|--|---|
| <b>2006</b> | <p>Teacher has a minimum of a Child Development Associate Credential [CDA] or equivalent</p> <p>Teacher has or is working toward an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>  | <p>Both teachers have a minimum of a Child development Associate credential or equivalent.</p> <p>Both teachers have or are working toward an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent</p>                       | <p>All teachers have a minimum of the CDA credential or equivalent</p> <p>At least 1 teacher has an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p> <p>All teachers have or are working on an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent</p> | <p>All teachers have a minimum of a CDA or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 25% of teachers have an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p> <p>All teachers have or are working on an Associates or Baccalaureate degree or equivalent</p> |
| <b>2010</b> | <p>Teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p>  | <p>Both teachers have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 1 of the 2 teachers is enrolled in a Baccalaureate degree program or equivalent.</p>  | <p>All 3 teachers must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 1 of the 3 teachers must be enrolled in a Baccalaureate degree program or equivalent.</p>   | <p>All teachers have a minimum of a CDA or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 50% of teachers have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>All must have or be enrolled in an Associates or Baccalaureate degree program.</p>              |
| <b>2015</b> | <p>The teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>The teacher must be working toward a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>  | <p>At least 1 teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 1 teacher must have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>  | <p>All teachers must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 1 of 3 teachers must have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>  | <p>All teachers have a minimum of an Associates degree.</p> <p>At least 50% of teachers have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>   |
| <b>2020</b> | <p>The teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent and be enrolled in a Baccalaureate program.</p> <p>By the next NAEYC Accreditation cycle the teacher must have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p> | <p>At least 1 teacher must have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p> <p>The second teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent and be working toward a Baccalaureate degree.</p> | <p>At least 2 teachers must have a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p> <p>The third teacher must have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p>   | <p>All teachers have a minimum of an Associates degree or equivalent.</p> <p>At least 75% of teachers have a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent.</p>   |

## Salaries

Organizations were asked to provide the lowest and highest salaries for various positions. Our programs have a variety of staffing patterns. Not all positions were relevant to all organizations. 19 organizations, representing 31 centers are shown. Only one respondent does not anticipate salary increases this year.

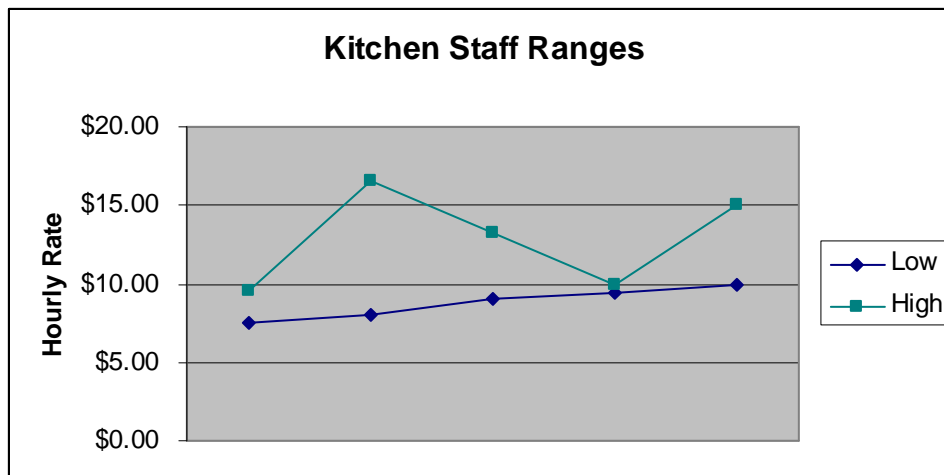


**The average hourly rate for a Program Director is \$20.55.  
\$42,744.00 annually.  
The range is from \$13.77 to \$38.16.**



**The average hourly rate for a Lead Teacher is \$13.76.  
\$28,620.00 annually.  
The range is from \$9.50 to \$19.00.**





**The average hourly wage for Kitchen Staff is \$9.02.  
 \$18,761.60 annually.  
 The range is from \$7.50 to \$16.50.**

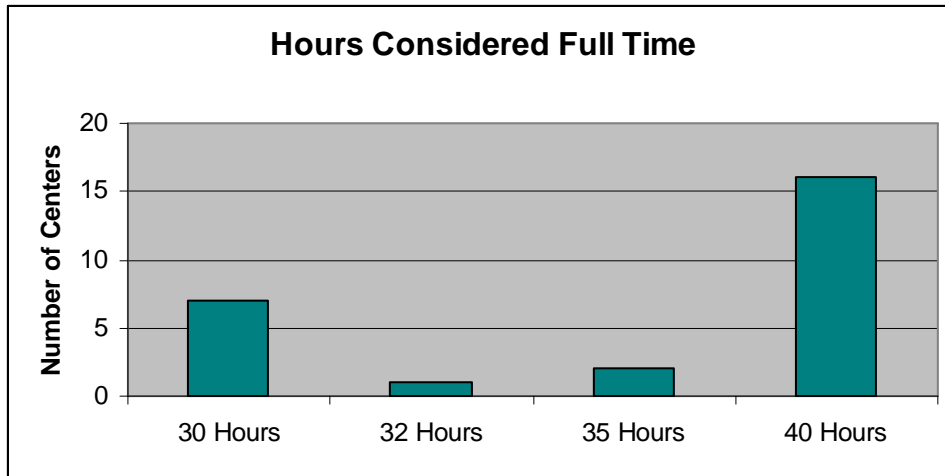
*“Poor pay of child care workers has created a multitude of problems in the industry and in our society. Child care workers’ wages seriously undermine the quality of care they give. The most important ingredient of quality is the relationship between the child and the teacher-caregiver. This relationship is multi-faceted: it involves a personal relationship, a teaching relationship, and the stability of the relationship. Low wages, little formal education in early childhood development, and high turnover all obstruct this relationship.”*

Economic Opportunity Institute/Vision 1994 Proposal

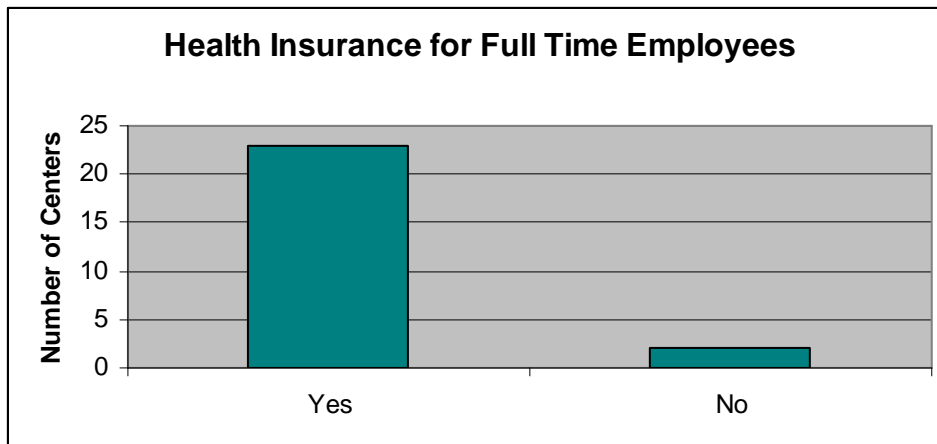


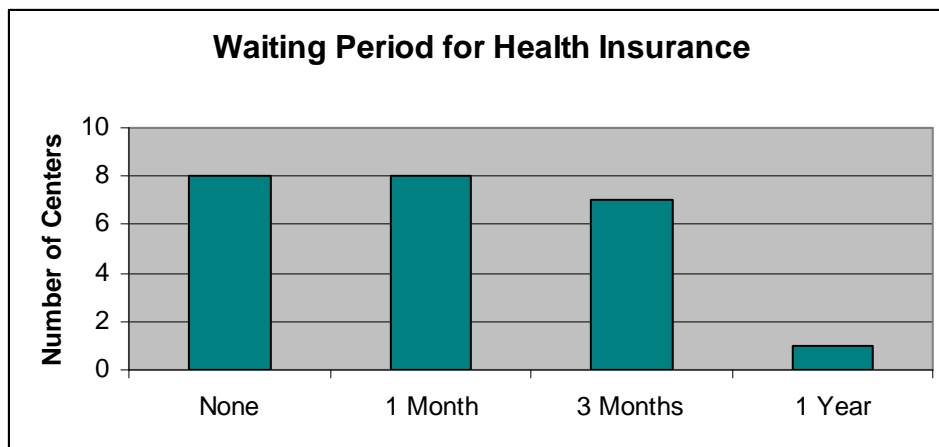
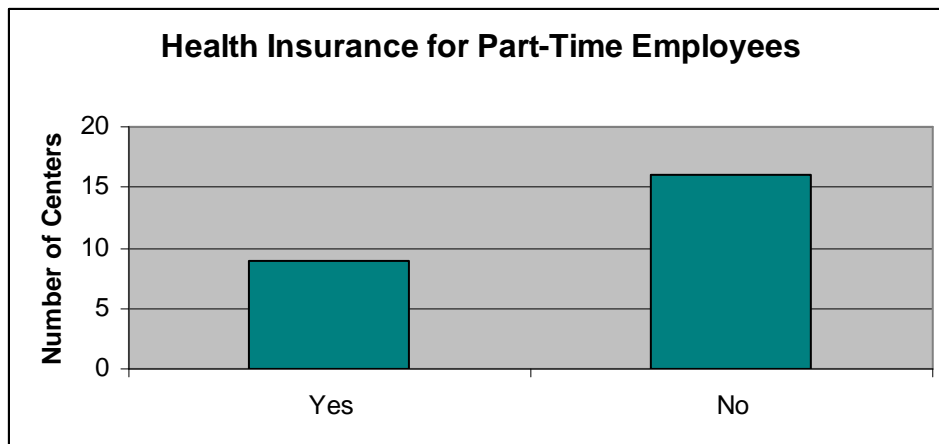
## Benefits

Great differences among organizations were seen with benefits provided for staff. Small organizations had greater difficulty providing benefits like health and disability insurance. Those housed in large, multi-service organizations had more robust benefit packages, yet in several, early childhood education staff is considered part-time so not eligible for benefits like insurance or paid vacation.



**Most organizations considered 40 hours per week full time.**



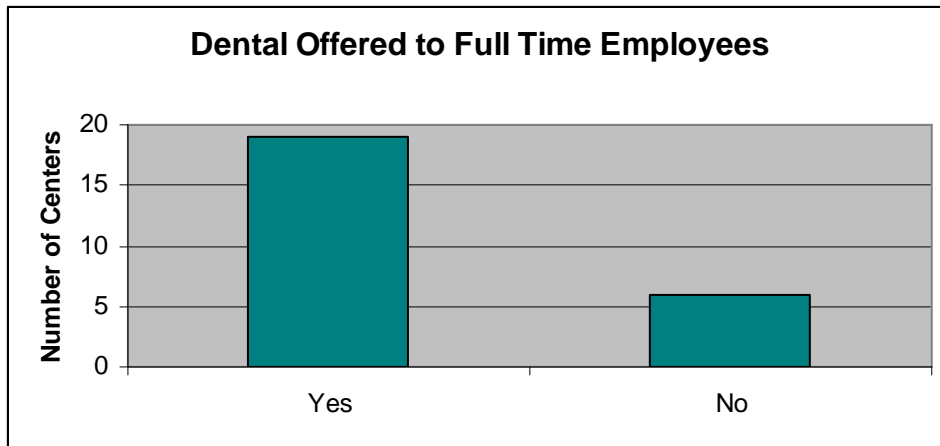


The largest organizations had the shortest waiting periods for eligibility for health insurance. Some smaller organizations had limitations on insurance benefits. For example, one organization only provided individual plans. Employees were not eligible for family coverage.

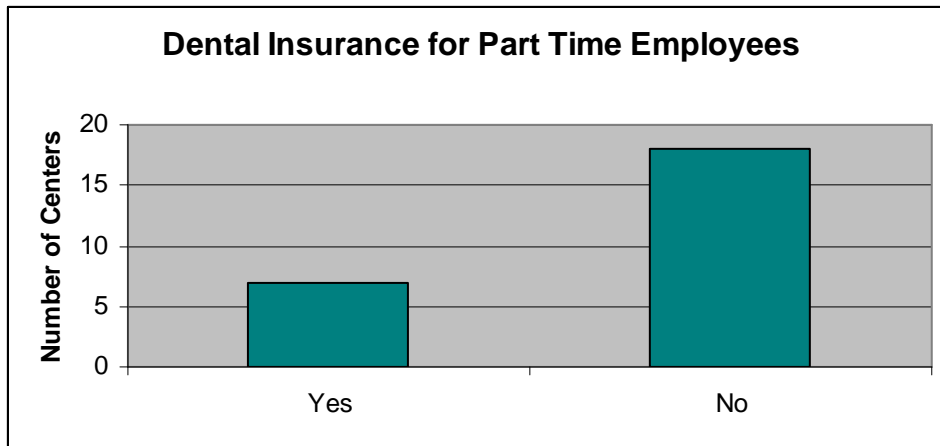


*Federal workers responding to a survey regarding benefits reinforced the importance of providing quality benefits to employees to ensure an organization's ability to attract an effective workforce. The benefits survey focused on ten benefit programs and was issued to a random sample of 2,000 employees. Employee health benefits, retiree health benefits, and retirement annuity consistently rated the highest in importance and value.*

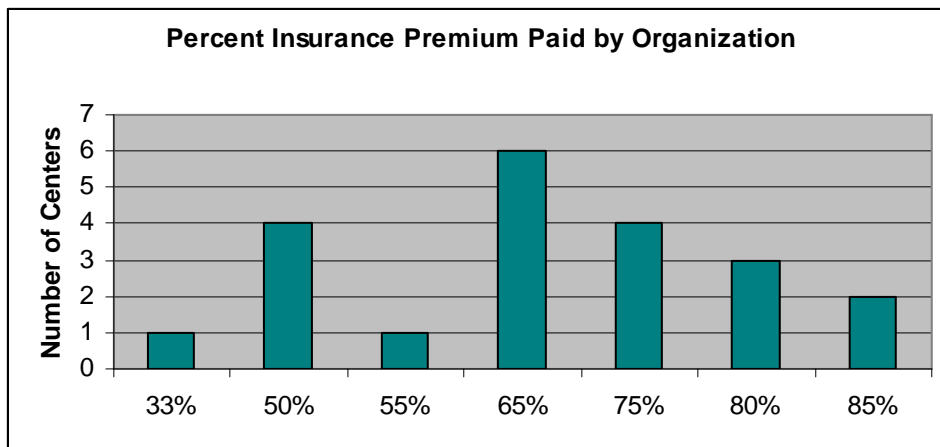
U.S. Office of Personnel management; 2006



Not all organizations offering health insurance offer a separate Dental Insurance plan.

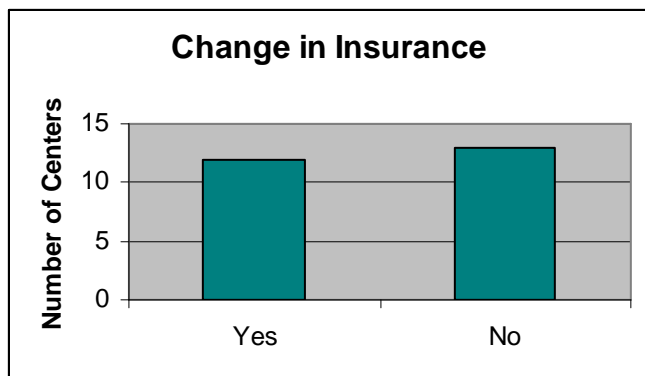


Dental Insurance for part-time employees is rare.



**The majority of organizations pay 65% of the insurance premium for staff.  
Higher percentages are paid by larger organizations.**

Agencies were asked if they had any recent changes in insurance benefits.



*“I lost a long-term teacher because her husband lost his job. He had carried the benefits. She sought another position so that she could carry the benefits for her family.”*

Agencies reporting changes in insurance indicated that in an effort to keep the premium lower deductibles have increased for inpatient services, prescription drugs and some other services like day surgery and emergency room visits.

**Organizations that do not offer insurance reported increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff.**

*“I interviewed a candidate that was perfect for the position. When she discovered that we were not able to offer her health insurance she was no longer interested in my organization”*

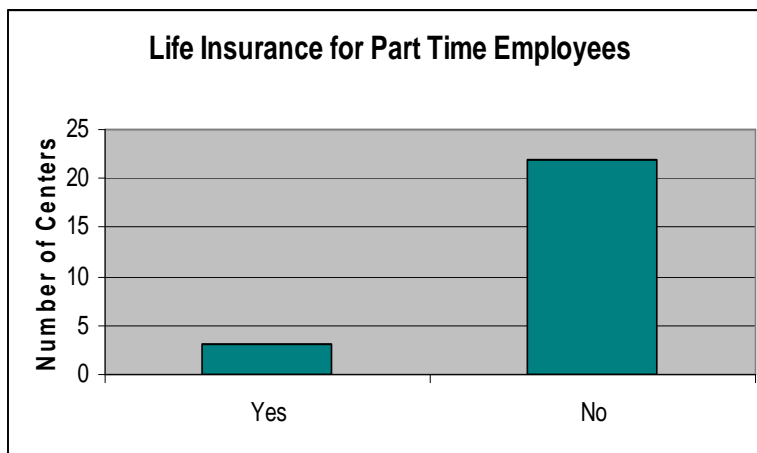
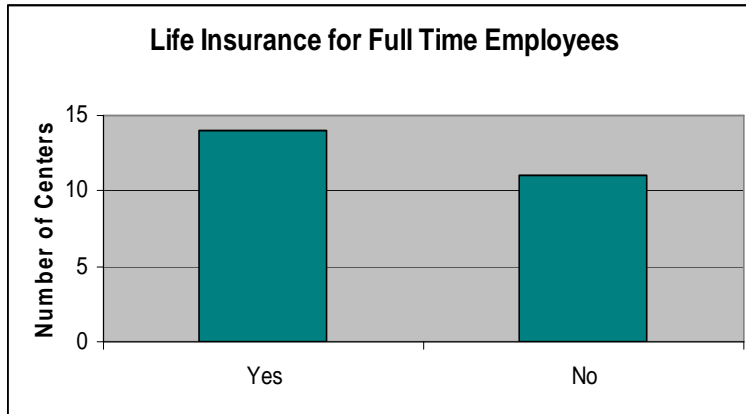


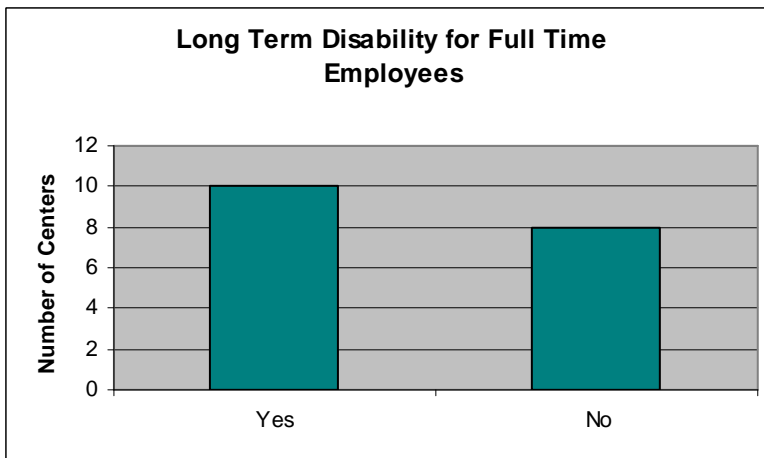
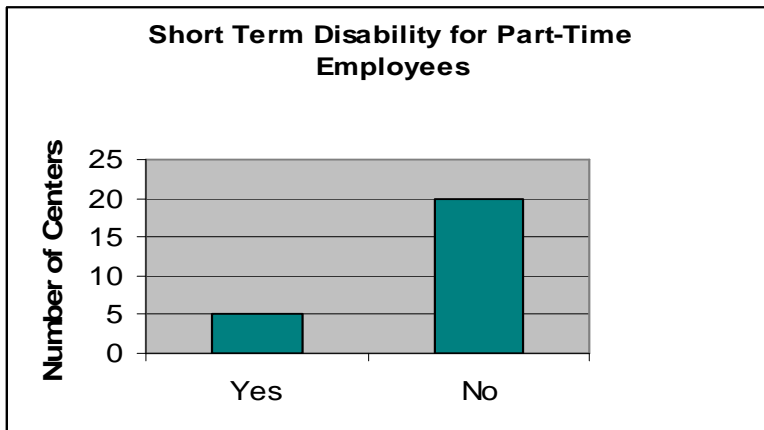
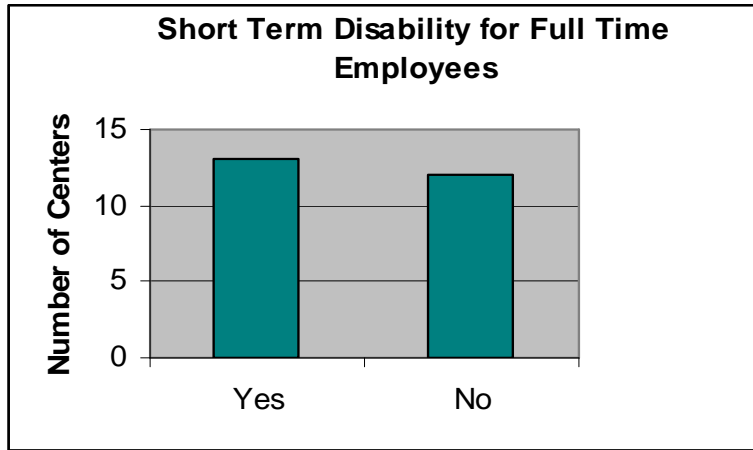
The decline in the education levels of center-based early childhood educators is related to a lack of health care and pension benefits and to median pay that has fallen from 76% of the wages of all Massachusetts workers to 66%. In 2000-04, early childhood educators earned about \$10.50 per hour—some \$22,000 per year for a full-time worker. The story that emerges from the data is that the position of center-based ECE in the Massachusetts labor market has changed for the worse since the 1980s. As the field has expanded from less than 10,000 workers in the early 1980s to nearly 30,000, female college graduates have enjoyed expanding career opportunities in other fields, and in some families, greater economic need. As a result, center directors often find that they must hire individuals with low education levels and no specialized training in early childhood development.

National data reveal that the most educated cohort in Early Childhood Education today is in its fifties, having entered the industry in the 1960s and 1970s. With opportunities for educated women expanding, and more families highly dependent on women’s earnings, it has become harder to attract qualified teachers into ECE. As many of the better-educated early childhood women retire, the difficulty of maintaining an adequately qualified ECE staff will grow that much more difficult. Industry demographics make it imperative that state and national policymakers act now to ensure the high teacher standards essential to long-term benefits from ECE programs.

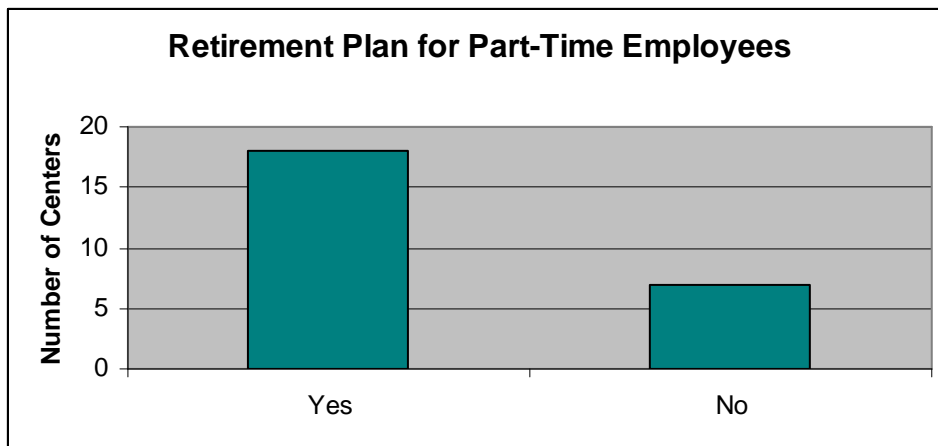
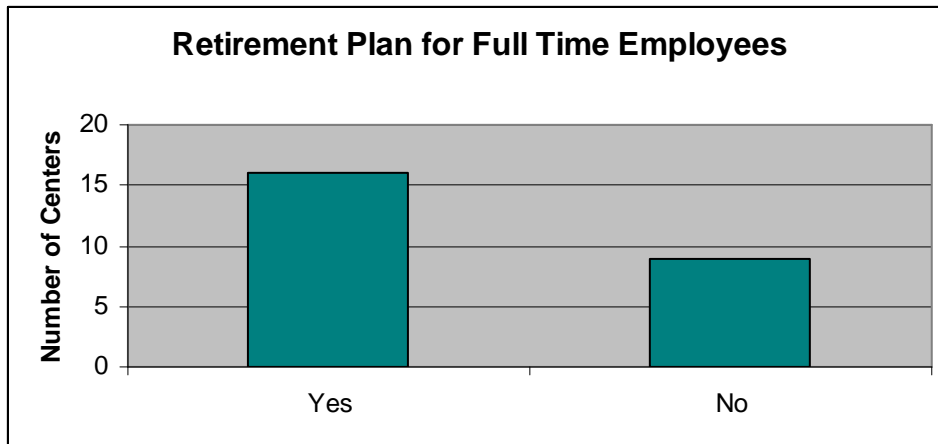
## Retirement, Life and Disability Insurance

Agencies were asked about other benefits. As expected, larger organizations had greater capacity to offer a more robust benefit package.





Only two organizations provide long term disability insurance for part-time employees.

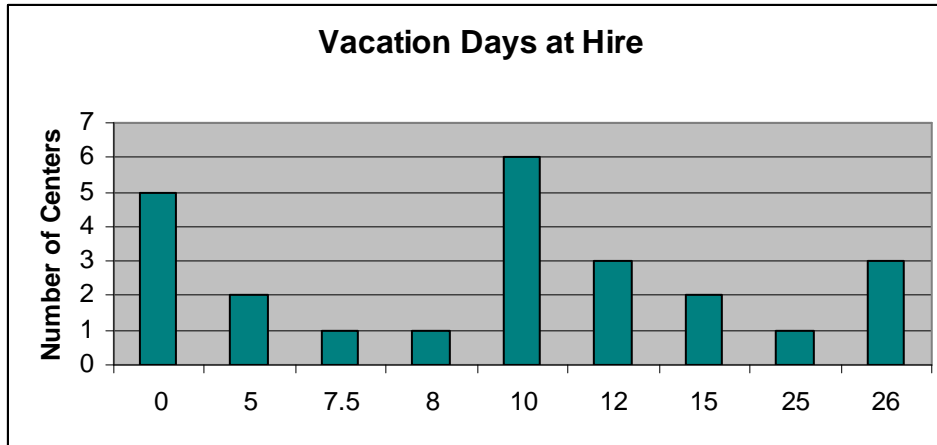


Only two organizations responding to the survey provide any type of match to employee retirement plans. Most require a one year waiting period before an employee can enroll in the retirement plan. Because contributions are made entirely by employees, very few organizations have 100% participation by eligible staff. One organization recently added a retirement plan to its benefit package as a tool for recruitment and retention.

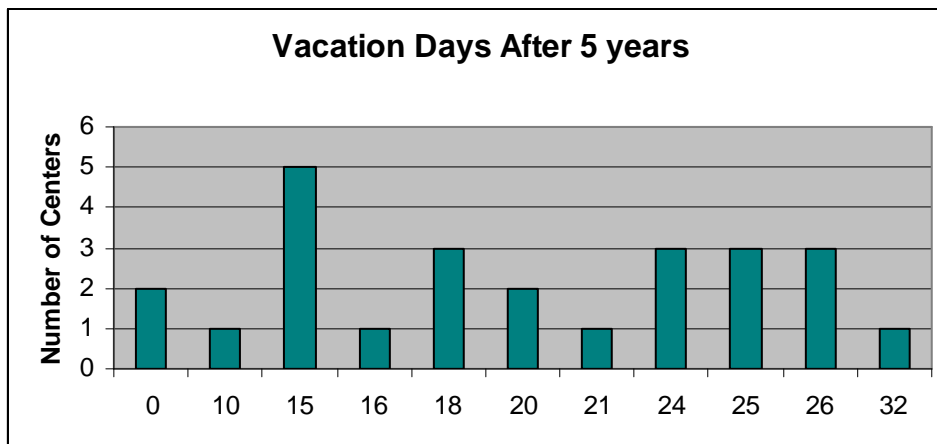
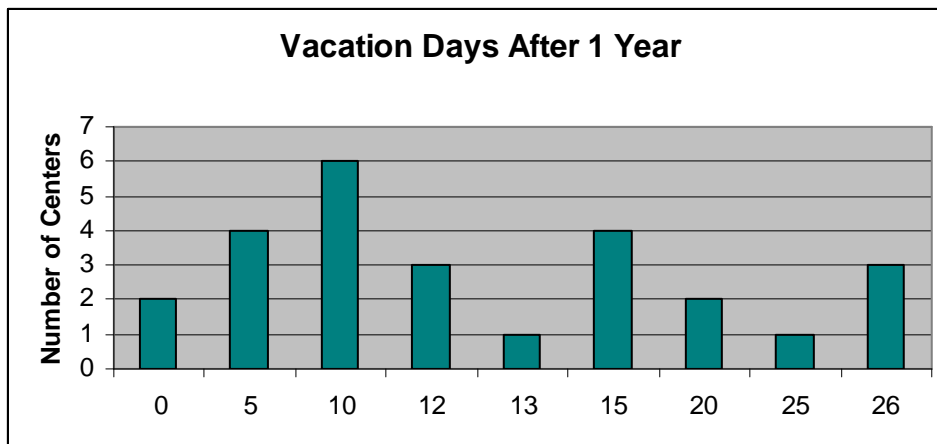
None of the respondents provide paid maternity or paternity leave beyond sick, vacation or personal days already accrued by the employee.

## Vacation, Sick and Personal Days

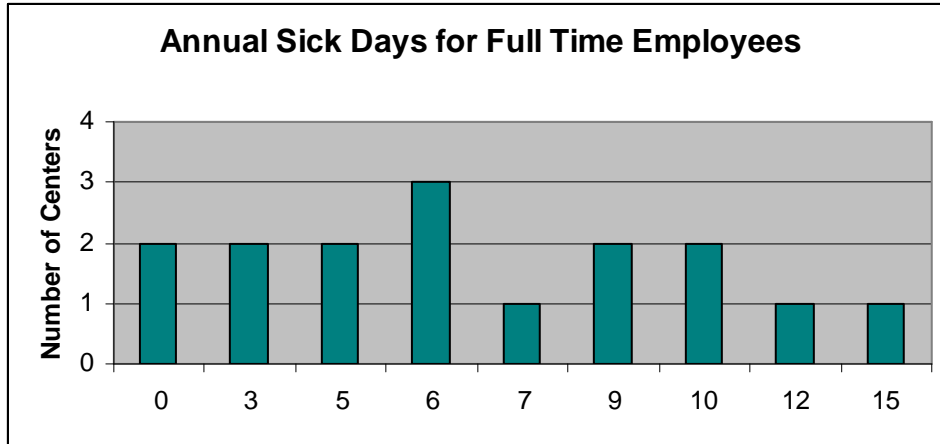
Three organizations surveyed provide employees with a lump sum number of days to be used as sick, vacation, or personal. A few organizations surveyed do not operate full day full year programs. They do not provide paid vacation time. There is a great variety between organizations and the vacation time they offer.



Those offering 25 and 26 days are the centers that lump sick, vacation, and personal days together. Employees chose how they wish to use those days.





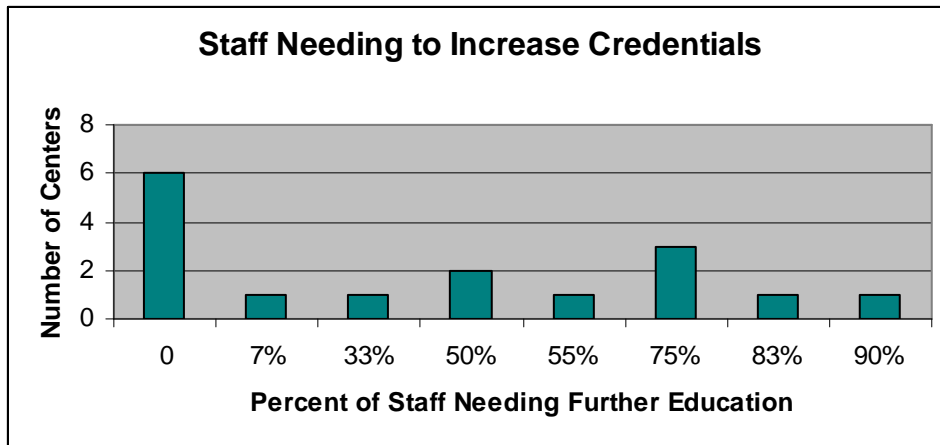


Sick days for part-time employees were, for the most part, pro-rated based on the number of days offered to full-time employees. Six organizations provided no sick time benefits for part-time employees.

**Twelve organizations provided other benefits like child care and health care savings accounts.**

### NAEYC Accreditation

The new National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation standards are challenging for many agencies. The new teacher education requirements are outlined on page 4. Our early childhood educators in Worcester are rising to the challenge. Only 2 of the organizations responding to the survey do not intend to pursue accreditation. 11 respondents have already achieved accreditation under the new standards. There is great diversity in teacher education across the community.



## Tuition Reimbursement

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care [DEEC] is committed to increasing the professionalism of the field. The Early Educators Scholarship, administered by DEEC, is designed to assist early childhood educators in pursuing higher education. Since its inception, the scholarship fund has not been able to keep up with demand. Our local organizations are also committed to higher education for staff. Most provide some sort of tuition assistance program to be used after the state funding is depleted. There is great variety among organizations on the amount provided.

Only 2 agencies request that staff make a commitment to remain with the center after completing their degree. One agency has not had to reimburse for higher education because the teacher has received the scholarship each semester. That organization does allow the teacher a more flexible schedule so that she is able to attend classes and complete her assignments.

A few organizations have a per employee maximum dollar amount that they contribute toward higher education. In those cases the teacher is able to use the money for books or supplies in addition to tuition costs.

*We would rather have staff working on their degree and then leave rather than have staff not making the effort.*

3 organizations pay 100% of tuition toward a college degree. They do not have an expectation that staff remain for any specific period of time. 2 of those require a C or better. 1 requires a B before tuition is reimbursed. They do not pay for books or supplies.

3 organizations pay 50% of tuition costs. 2 of those require a C or better, 1 requires a B or better before tuition is reimbursed.

1 organization pays 20% of tuition costs. The payment is made in advance but the teacher is expected to receive a B or better in the course.

1 organization provides \$100.00 toward a course. A total of \$200.00 is available each year. The money can be used for books. The teacher is paid after receiving a grade of C or better.

1 organization pays up to \$2000.00 annually for full-time employees and \$1000.00 annually for part-time employees. The benefit is provided after the teacher receives a C or better. Books may be purchased with the benefit.

1 organization pays up to \$750.00 after the staff person receives a B or better. The benefit may be used to purchase books.

1 organization pays up to \$900.00 for tuition only after the teacher receives a B or better.

1 organization pays 50% up to \$300.00 for tuition and books. The benefit is paid after the teacher earns a B or better with an expectation that the staff person remain.

2 organizations do not have a set policy. Reimbursement varies.

Our local early education programs are engaged in the important work of preparing our youngest children to enter school ready to learn and to succeed. All would like to provide higher salaries and more benefits to their teachers. They must balance this desire with the ability of parents to afford high quality early education and care.

The research shows that high quality early education programs, particularly for low income children provide high economic returns. Children who are given the opportunity to participate in quality programs, with highly educated teachers are less likely to be enrolled in special education, less likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system, are more likely to graduate from high school and pursue further education and are less likely to rely on the welfare system as adults.

***Any approach to improving staff standards in ECE will fail unless it also raises compensation to keep more qualified people in the field. The present reality will persist, with many ECE staff having low education levels, no meaningful training in early childhood development, and no opportunities to learn from experienced and qualified peers. It is well past time to recognize that society can't afford not to pay more for ECE teachers. Only with public investment can the community as a whole reap the long-term benefits of high-quality early childhood education.***

Losing Ground in Massachusetts Early Childhood Education; Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief; September 15, 2005

Many studies also indicate that early childhood educators who have more formal education and specialized training in early childhood development offer care that is more warm and supportive, more stimulating for children and provide more age appropriate environments for young children.

Our early care and education programs understand the importance of a highly educated workforce and are committed to the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unfortunately, parent fees for early education remain subsidized by low teacher salaries and benefits.

Report prepared by Dianne Bruce, Edward Street Child Services; February 2008