The Early Education Workforce is Central to Quality Early Learning

A qualified early educator—one who knows how to create a dynamic learning environment—is at the center of a high-quality early learning experience. Critical economic and societal benefits of a quality early childhood are determined by the long-term development of a trained and supported workforce. Only the most effective educators and staff can ensure that the littlest learners in their care have the early experiences they need to succeed in school, graduate on time, and thrive later in life.

In Ohio, more than 53,000 EARLY EDUCATORS have dedicated their careers to ensuring our young children—our state’s future—receive the nurturing care and early learning experiences that lead to healthy development and lifelong success.

OVER 90% of Early Educators are FEMALE

APPROX. 2/3 of Early Educators are OVER age 30

$20,508 avg. annual income for early educators

$54,021 statewide avg. annual income

OVER 60% of Early Educators have a degree or credential beyond a high school diploma

More than half of early educators in Ohio rely on some form of public assistance.

MOREOVER:
There are clear gaps in compensation between African American early educators and their peers.

Early Educators Earning Less than $15 per hour:

84% AFRICAN AMERICAN

73% WHITE & HISPANIC

SOURCE: 2013 Workforce Study, Ohio Early Learning & Development Programs
Ohio can continue to invest in the early education workforce to improve outcomes for at-risk children by exploring the following strategies:

- **Support statewide career pathways** that provide a road map for early childhood professionals to advance their careers through increasing levels of education, experience, demonstrated competencies, and compensation.

- **Maintain and improve a comprehensive professional development system** with stable funding and measures for quality assurance.

- **Increase compensation and improve benefit standards.**

- **Promote data-driven policies and programs** for the workforce through a statewide workforce registry.

- **Bolster scholarship programs** for early educators.

- **Reward degree completion** with wage supplements or tax credits.

On average, early educators earn a wage of about $9.86 per hour—putting them toward the bottom of the wage-earning percentile across all occupations, which leads to high rates of employee turnover.

When early educators leave early learning environments, it disrupts the consistent, nurturing environment that developing children need to thrive. Employers are also left with the additional economic burden of constantly recruiting and training new staff members to ensure safe learning environments. By providing necessary supports for the wellbeing and financial stability of the early education workforce, retention rates increase, child outcomes improve, and the whole state benefits.

**Sources:**

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