

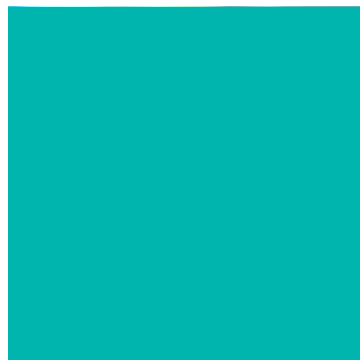
SOUTH CAROLINA EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

WORKFORCE STUDY USING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA - 2025

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SC Endeavors is funded by South Carolina Department of Social Services.



Overview

The 2025 Workforce Study uses SC Endeavors, the state's comprehensive early care and education (ECE) workforce registry, to describe the composition of South Carolina's workforce in early care and education settings.

Workforce Study Data Source - SC Endeavors Database

In general, ECE workforce studies are conducted using survey methodology. The most recent survey in South Carolina was conducted in 2018 using the traditional survey methodology, which involved sending a link to child care providers, teachers, directors, and staff to complete the survey anonymously. However, in 2019, the SC Department of Social Services (DSS) launched SC Endeavors, an ECE workforce registry, which can capture most of the information about the workforce they have volunteered in the system under their accounts. Recent initiatives such as SC BOO\$T, SC Workforce Relief, and ABC Quality have increased the number of workforce members sharing their data in SC Endeavors, giving us the confidence to use this highly representative data to describe the ECE Workforce in South Carolina.



SC Endeavors is funded by South Carolina Department of Social Services.

What is the size of the Early Care and Education Workforce in South Carolina?

The size of the ECE workforce is estimated using the number of “active” registry participants in the SC Endeavors registry. SC Endeavors contains many records from its previous training registry database, SC Center for Child Care Career Development (SC CCCCD), and includes ECE professionals in the field who do not work in a child care facility. Therefore, as a first step, the data extracted from SC Endeavors was filtered only to include registry participants whose App Status Name was either “Active,” “Signed In,” or “New.”

The next step was to limit the analysis to active participants who had shared their employment information. This eliminated about 15,000 participants who had not shared their employment information. The number of participants was further reduced to include only those who indicated they were employed in positions of “Direct Care.” Below is a table displaying the employee positions of participants engaged in “Direct Care” and “Not in Direct Care.”

The data for analysis was further limited to only participants who listed their employment in a currently active child care facility with an SC DSS license number. These facilities have a licensed, approved, or registered license type and are in operation, including exempt centers. If participants had multiple employment details listed, the latest employment that does not have an ‘end date’ in the system was identified, indicating that the employment is current.

After identifying that registry participants met all the above conditions, the final data extracted from the SC Endeavors website, used for the 2025 workforce study report comprises **21,414** registry participants.



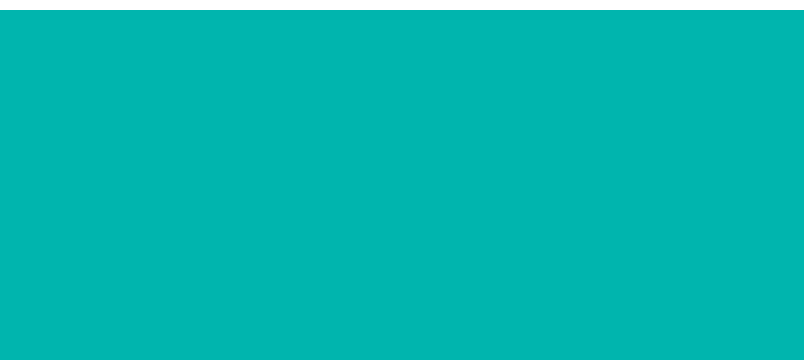
Table 1: SC ECE Workforce Employee Positions by Direct Care Status

Employee Position in Direct Care	Employee Position Not in Direct Care
Aide	Agency Staff
Assistant Director	Caseworker
Assistant Teacher	Coach
Co-Director	Consultant
Director	Curriculum Coordinator
Early Intervention/Special Education	Director
Emergency	Education Coordinator
FFN Provider	Family Service Coordinator
Floater	Intern
Non-Teaching Professional Staff	Licensur
Non-Teaching Support Staff	Mentor
Primary Care Provider	Other
Substitute	Outreach Specialist
Teacher	Professional Development Advisor
Volunteer	Referral Specialist
Technical Assistance Provider	Trainer

For comparison, the 2024 Early Childhood Workforce Index by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment estimates South Carolina's ECE Workforce to be 23,100 (Figure 1).

The 2024 Early Childhood Workforce Index provides a snapshot of the size and demographics of the early childhood workforce using the latest data from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education, and not the BLS data used in previous indices.

Figure 1: A national estimate of ECE workforce in South Carolina



Where do they work?

Approximately 82% of the ECE workforce in South Carolina works in child care centers, followed by nearly 11% in registered faith-based child care centers and 4% in family child care and group homes (Table 2). A small percentage work in other exempt child care centers, which include public school PreK and Head Start programs. Table 3 indicates the distribution of child care facility types that employ the ECE workforce.

Table 2: Percent of Individuals in the SC ECE Workforce Registry by Organization Type (N = 21,414)

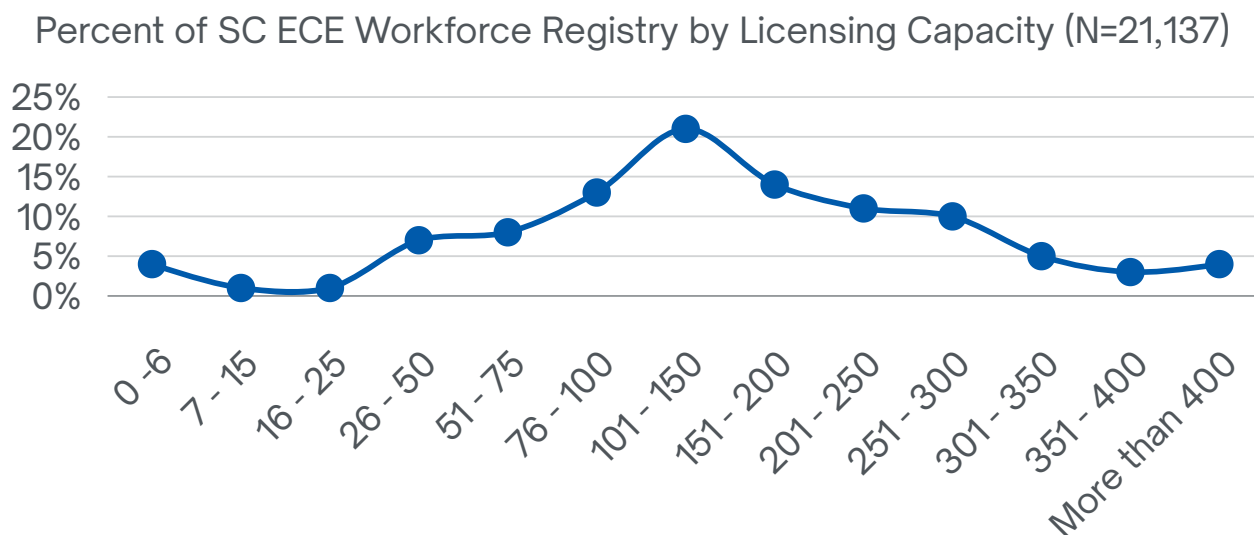
Organization Type	N	%
Child Care Center	17,609	82%
Registered Faith-Based Child Care Center	2,279	11%
Exempt Child Care Center	673	3%
Family Child Care Home	747	4%
Group Child Care Home	106	<1%

Table 3: Child Care Facility Distribution in South Carolina

Facility Type	N	%
Child Care Center	1,431	59%
Registered Faith-Based Child Care Center	185	8%
Exempt Child Care Center	94	4%
Family Child Care Home	670	28%
Group Child Care Home	50	2%

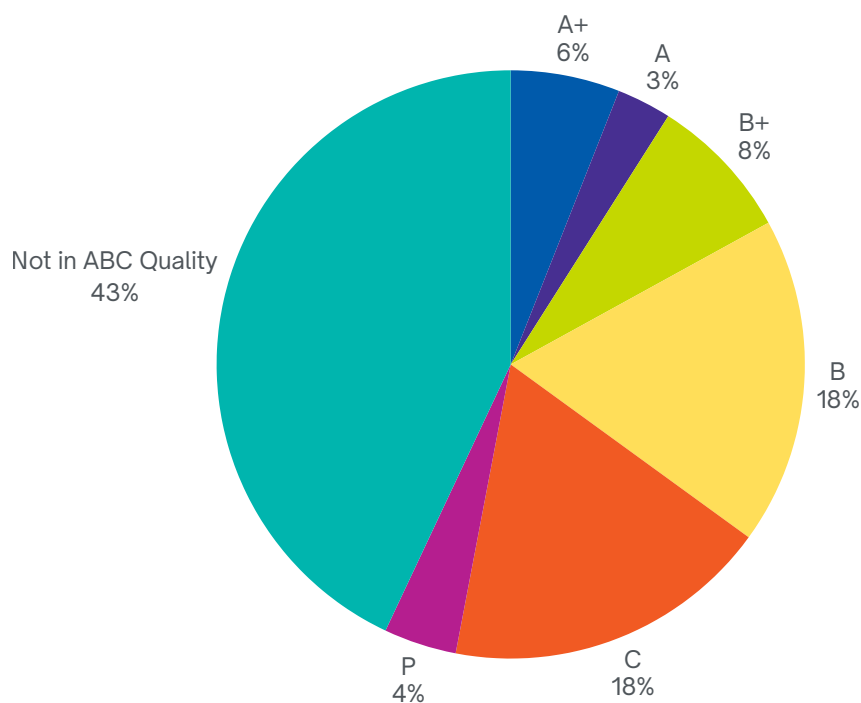
Nearly 21% (N = 4,347) of the ECE workforce work in child care facilities with a capacity of 101-150 children, and 3% (N = 747) of the workforce are family child care providers. More than 52% (11,146) of the ECE workforce reports working at a facility with a capacity of 150 children or less.

Figure 2: ECE Workforce Registry Participants by License Capacity



Nearly 58% (N = 12,312) of the ECE workforce reported that their child care facility is participating in ABC Quality either at a rated level or pending (P).

Figure 3: ECE Workforce Registry by ABC Quality Level of Facility of Employment



What positions do they hold?

Most of the ECE workforce are teachers (54%) or assistant teachers (20%). Other positions listed as direct care were at the administrative level, such as directors and assistant directors, as well as teaching and non-teaching positions at child care facilities. Table 4 lists the positions of ECE workers' latest employment on record in a licensed, registered, or approved child care facility.

Table 4: SC ECE Workforce Registry by Position Title & Facility Type (N = 21,414)

Position Title	Child Care Center	Registered Faith-Based Child Center	Exempt Child Care Center	Family Child Care Home	Group Child Care Home
Aide	155	42	12	57	6
Assistant Director	516	53	29	24	8
Assistant Teacher	3,790	481	40	44	11
Co-Director	194	21	15	10	#
Director	1,333	161	104	440	42
Early Intervention-Special Education	#	0	0	0	0
Emergency	34	6	#	0	0
Floater	792	112	#	0	0
Non-Teaching Professional Staff	467	40	33	0	0
Non-Teaching Support Staff Primary Care	306	31	#	0	0
Provider	0	0	0	59	9
Substitute	313	36	#	27	#
Teacher	9,677	1,294	425	45	18
Volunteer	31	#	#	41	7

denotes 5 or fewer

What ages do they serve?

Registry participants could select each age group they serve from a "select all that apply" menu. Anyone who selected more than one age group was assigned the Multiple Age group. Most of the ECE workforce (N = 9,428) worked with children of multiple age groups. For participants who work with only one age group, most indicated that they serve Toddlers (23%), specifically children from 12 months to three years of age. Few participants indicated that they only work with Infants (8%) and children in Pre-Kindergarten (four to five years) (7%). (Table 5).

Table 5: Percent of SC ECE Workforce Registry by Age Groups of Children Served (N = 21,414)

Age Group Served	N	%
Infants	1,660	8%
Toddlers	4,855	23%
Preschool	2,592	12%
Pre-KG	1,436	7%
School Age	1,443	7%
Multiple Age Groups	9,428	44%



What are the characteristics of the South Carolina Early Care and Education Workforce?

Age: The ECE workforce is predominantly female, with 54% (N = 11,480) under the age of 40. Employees under 20 accounted for about 3% (N = 733) of the workforce, while 30% (N = 6,417) were 50 or above. The workforce between the ages of 20 and 29 in child care centers was the largest category, comprising 30% (N = 6,369) of the workforce.

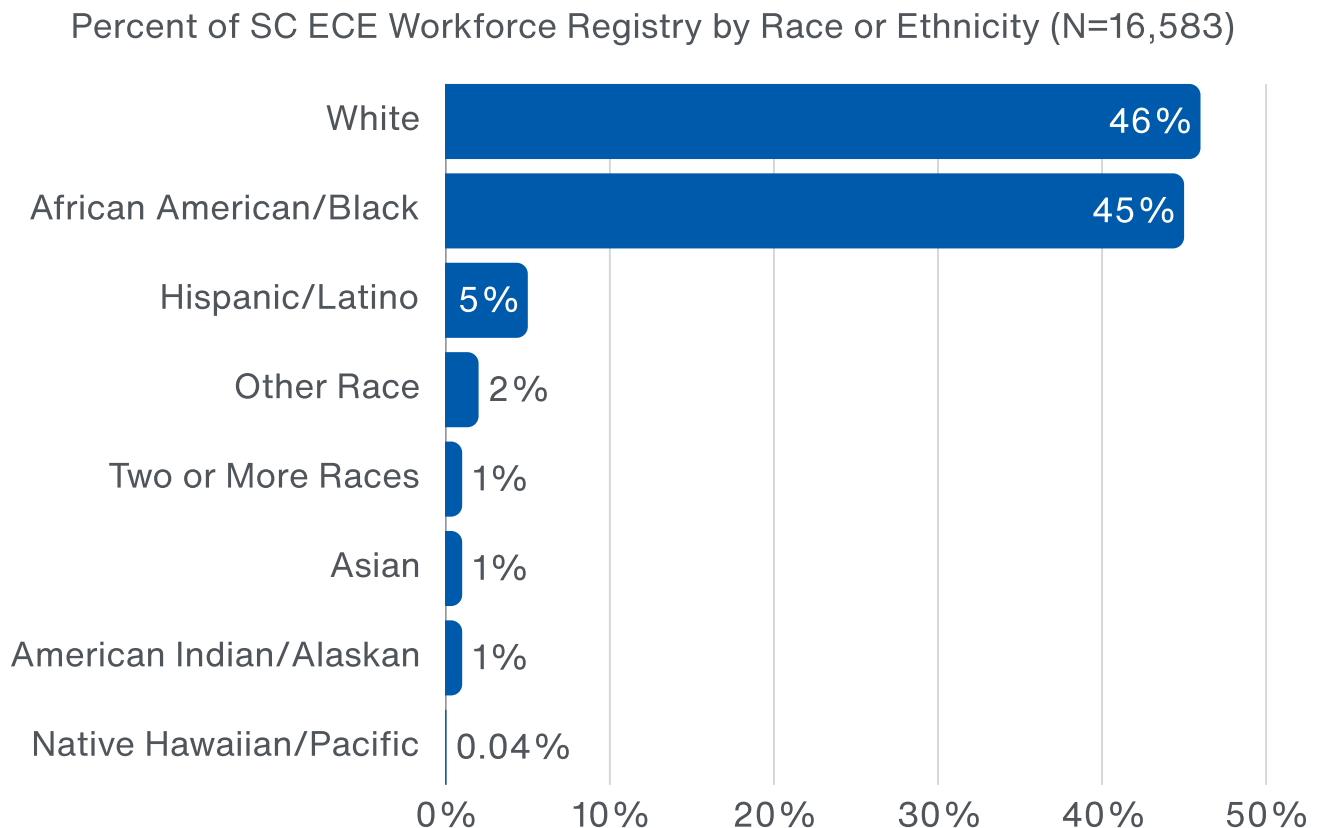
Table 6: Percent of SC ECE Workforce Registry by Age and Facility Type (N = 21,414)

Age of Staff	Child Care Center	Registered Faith-Based Child Care Center	Exempt Child Care Center	Family Child Care Home	Group Child Care Home	Total
Under 20 years	623	60	40	9	1	733
20-29 years	5,611	493	182	71	12	6,369
30-39 years	3,680	495	92	103	8	4,378
40-49 years	2,776	462	114	156	9	3,517
50-59 years	2,393	385	118	174	21	3,091
60+ years	2,526	384	127	234	55	3,326
Total	17,609	2,279	673	747	106	21,414

Race and Ethnicity

The registry participants can select multiple race categories and respond if they are Hispanic. Figure 4 indicates the combination of race and ethnicity of the ECE workforce in South Carolina. The majority of the ECE Workforce is White (46%) or African American (45%). Hispanic/Latino participants constitute more than 5% (N=875) of the ECE workforce, while other race categories were represented by 5% of the ECE workforce.

Figure 4: ECE Workforce Registry by Race or Ethnicity



Language

Of the registry participants who shared information on their primary language, English is spoken by 98% of the ECE workforce. In comparison, only 1% of the ECE workforce indicated Spanish as a spoken language. According to the 2024 Census, 9% of the population in South Carolina spoke a language other than English.

**Table 7: Number of SC ECE Workforce Registry by Primary Language
(N = 16,484)**

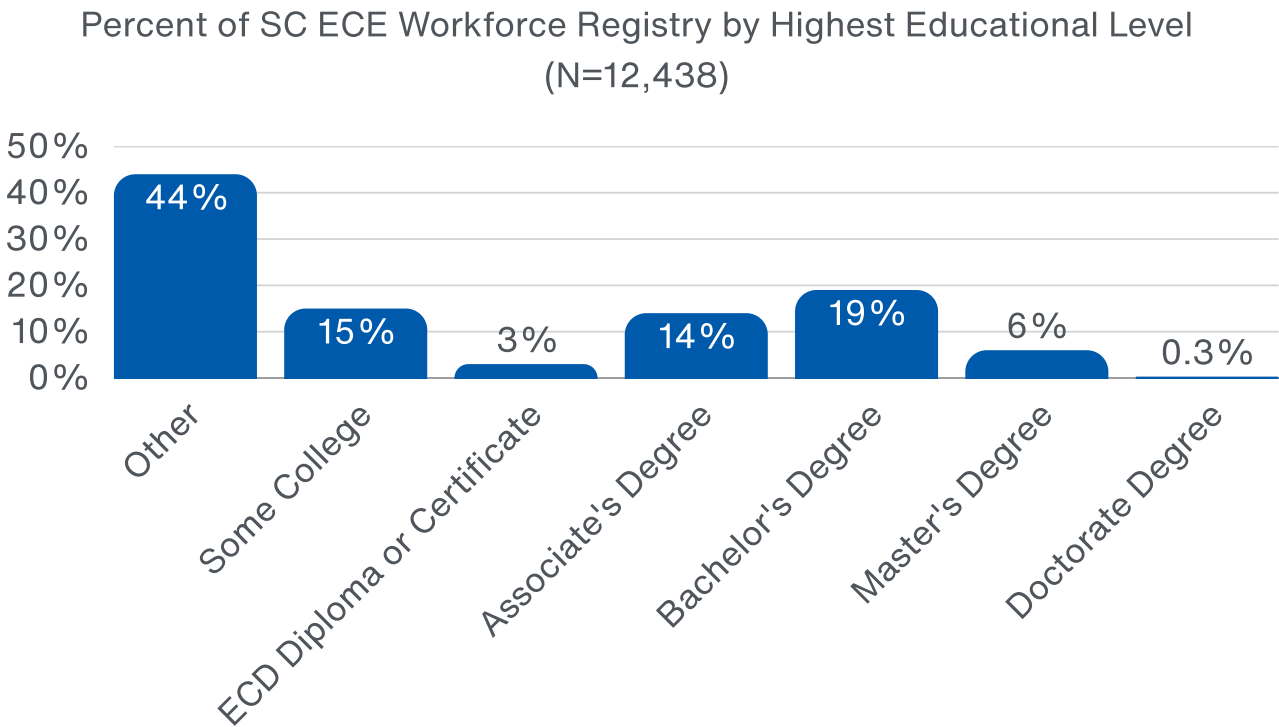
Language	N
English	16,198
Spanish	218
Portuguese	15
Arabic	8
Other	45



Education

Similar to employment, the workforce registry contains all educational degrees and information a participant is willing to share. Although the system has a verification process for education, to stay true to a survey methodology of data collection, this report includes all self-reported education that may or may not be verified. The educational levels for every registry participant are listed from highest to lowest. Only the highest level of education is reported. Participants' educational attainments, such as a Montessori certificate, CDA, Infant/Toddler Credentials, Director's Credential, etc. are categorized as "Other." High school education is not listed as an education level because South Carolina licensing regulations require high school education as the minimal requirement to work in child care facilities; therefore, we assume all registry participants working in child care facilities have a high school education.

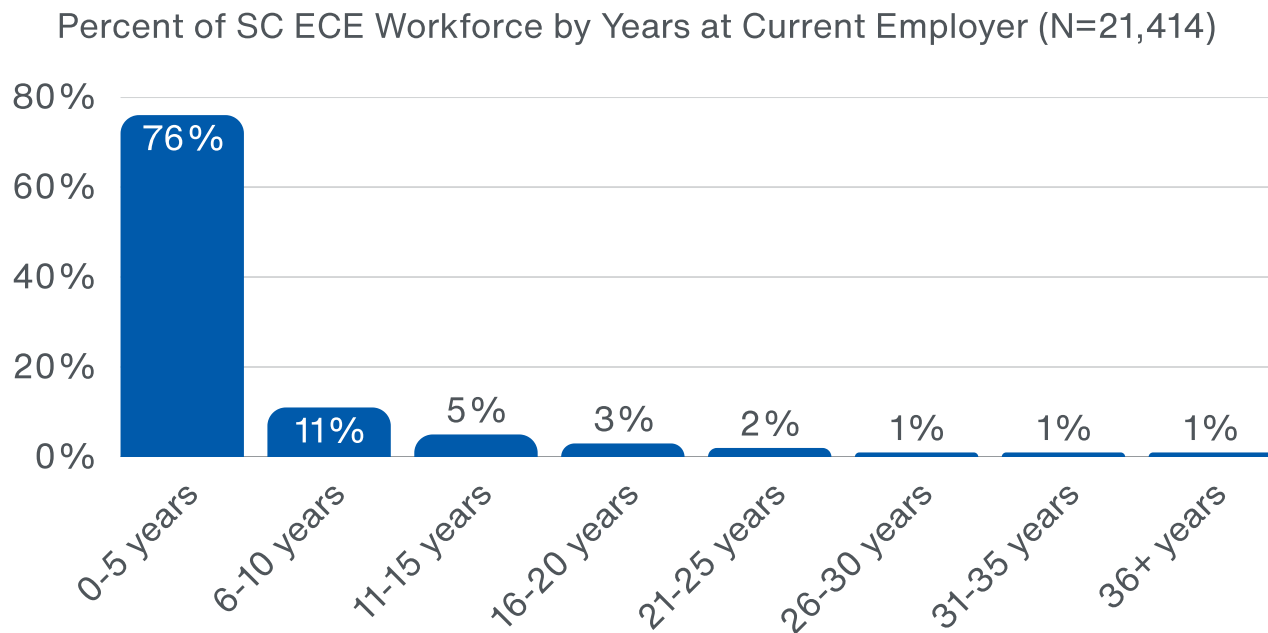
Figure 5: ECE Workforce Registry by Highest Education Level



Retention

Employment data collected in the SC Endeavors system include the start and end dates of the employment. When ECE staff enter this data, they can add their previous employment with start and end dates. They would share their current employment without an end date, only a start date. All records in the final dataset do not have an end date, indicating that the employment on record is the registry participant's current employment. We conclude that the employment record may not have been updated at the time of data extract for this report, noting this as a limitation to using administrative data for a workforce study. Using the start date for the employment, as of January 1, 2025, the number of years of current employment is recorded as 'retention' in the current employment. Nearly 76% of the ECE workforce had been employed in their current employment for five years or less. Almost 19% of the ECE workforce had been employed for six to 20 years.

Figure 6: ECE Workforce Registry by Years at Current Employer



Compensation

The registry participants shared their wage information as hourly or monthly salaries. For participants who gave annual salaries, their annual salaries were converted to hourly wages by dividing the annual salary by the number of months worked per year, then dividing that value by 4.33 to obtain the weekly wage, and finally dividing the weekly salary by the number of hours participants reported working weekly. Nearly 92% of the child care staff reported they earned \$20 or less, with the largest proportion (47%) earning between \$11 and \$15/hour. Among the publicly funded staff, about 75% reported that they earned \$20 or less with the largest proportion (47%) earning \$16-\$20. Outliers and data errors, such as salaries in hourly wages or vice versa, were removed and categorized as “Missing or Invalid.”

Table 8: Percent of SC ECE Workforce Registry by Hourly Wage (N = 18,002)

	Child Care Staff		Publicly Funded Staff	
Hourly Wage	N	%	N	%
Minimum Wage - \$10	1,752	11%	39	2%
\$11 - \$15	7,736	47%	431	25%
\$16 - \$20	5,526	34%	810	47%
\$21 - \$25	830	5%	285	17%
More than \$25	444	3%	149	9%
Total	16,288	100%	1,714	100%

Note: In 2024 and 2025, SC Endeavors implemented wage supplement programs. The application required them to update their education, employment, and compensation records. This likely caused more information on compensation in the data system from the ECE workforce.

The median wage for the ECE workforce in South Carolina is \$15/hour. Exempt child care centers have the highest median wages of \$16/hour, and family and group child care home employees have the lowest median wages of \$12-\$13/hour.

Table 9: Median Hourly Wage by Facility Type (N=18,002)

Facility Type	N	Median Hr.
Exempt Child Care Center	562	\$16.00
Child Care Center	15,025	\$15.00
Registered Faith-Based Center	1,904	\$14.00
Family Child Care Home	449	\$13.00
Group Child Care Home	62	\$12.23

Wages by Education Levels

ECE wages are higher for those with higher education, as seen in Figure 8. SC Endeavors has created the South Carolina Early Care and Education Career Ladder, designed for early childhood educators to track their academic accomplishments and use as a tool to plan for professional growth in the field. Figure 7 illustrates the 10 levels on the career ladder and the corresponding education levels associated with them.

The median wages typically rise with the Career Levels, with a few exceptions, ranging from about \$13.48/\$15.00 for Level 1 to \$21.10/\$25.01 for Level 10.



Figure 7: ECE Career Ladder in Professional Development System Developed by SC Endeavors

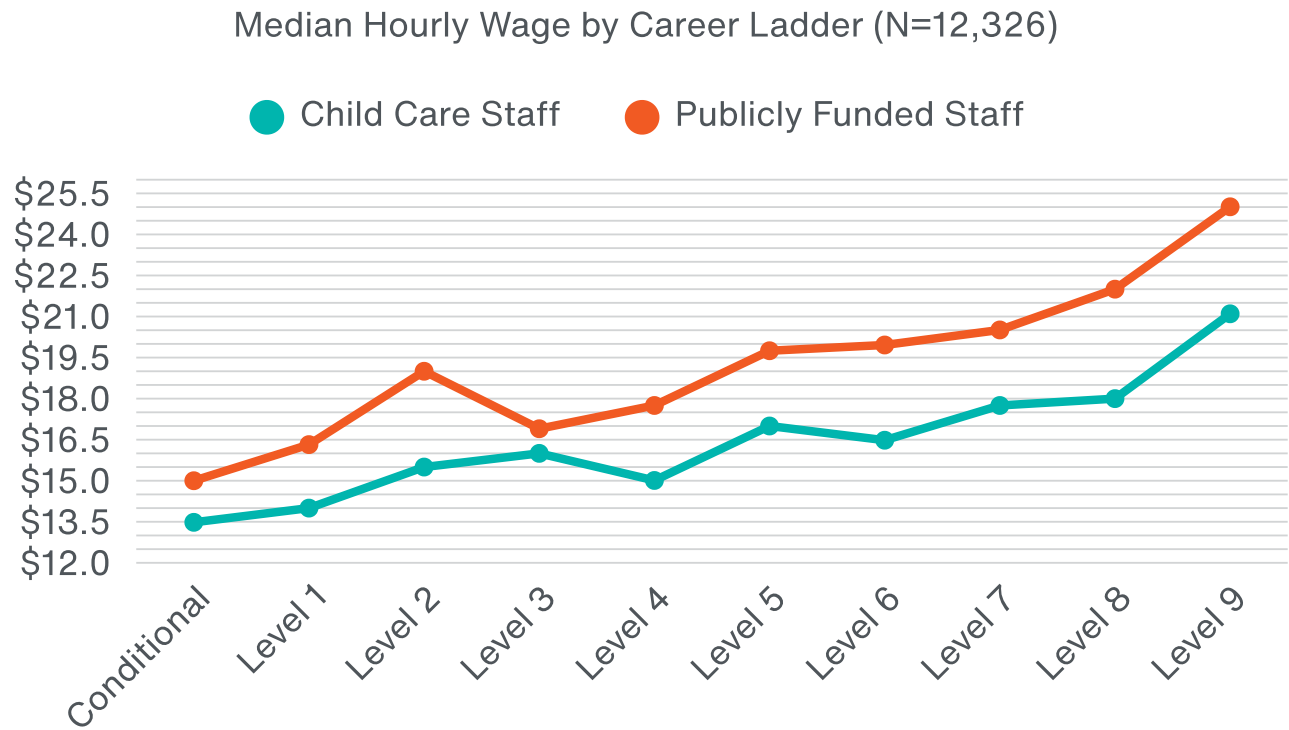


Early Care and Education Career Ladder

Created to support the professional development system for early care and education professionals developed by SC Endeavors and funded by the Department of Social Services.

LEVEL 1	■ High school diploma or equivalent
LEVEL 2	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 1 – (3 ECE credit hours) ■ Degree out of field with no ECE credit hours
LEVEL 3	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 2 – (12 ECE credit hours) ■ Current/Valid National Child Development Associate (CDA) ■ Current/Valid Montessori credential recognized by MACTE
LEVEL 4	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 3 – (21 ECE credit hours) ■ Early Childhood Certificate/Diploma – (27 ECE credit hours) ■ Associate's degree or higher out of field and a current Montessori credential recognized by MACTE ■ Associate's degree or higher out of field and a current CDA
LEVEL 5	■ Associate's degree or higher in related field and a current Montessori Credential recognized by MACTE ■ Associate's degree or higher in related field and a current CDA ■ Associate's degree in a related field with 18 ECE credit hours ■ Associate's degree in an unrelated field with 27 ECE credit hours ■ Bachelor's degree or Higher out of field with 12 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 6	■ Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education ■ Bachelor's Degree in related field with 12 ECE credit hours ■ Bachelor's Degree or Higher out of field with 27 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 7	■ Bachelor's Degree in a related field with 18 ECE credit hours ■ Master's or Doctorate Degree in a related field and 12 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 8	■ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood ■ Master's or Doctorate Degree in a related field and 18 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 9	■ Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education ■ Doctoral Degree in related field with 18 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 10	■ Doctoral Degree in Early Childhood Education

Figure 8: Median Hourly Salary by Career Ladder



National ECE Wages Estimate

The CCSE 2024 Workforce Study Index reported a median wage of \$10.96 in 2022. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program estimates median wages for 2023 were \$14.60 for childcare workers, \$17.85 for preschool teachers, and \$26.10 for directors or administrators.



Figure 9: National Wage Estimate



**This edition of the Early Childhood Workforce Index uses data from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)—a departure from previous editions, which reported data from the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS). The most recent year for which detailed, state-by-state data are available from the ACS is 2022. Using the ACS is an intentional change to provide more inclusive wage estimates for the ECE workforce by using a data source that includes home-based providers. More recent data from OEWS 2023 are available, but this data source excludes self-employed workers like family child care providers. The OEWS also does not allow us to study the ECE workforce as a whole. For instance, the national BLS OEWS estimates for median wages in 2023 were \$14.60 for child care workers, \$17.85 for preschool teachers, and \$26.10 for directors or administrators.

Conclusion

The workforce is the backbone of early care and education systems, and data on the state's ECE workforce is crucial to inform policy, strategy, and investments to strengthen and provide equitable opportunities for them. The ECE workforce requires investment to recruit and retain effective professionals. ECE workforce studies play a crucial role by providing robust, data-driven insights into the make-up, challenges, and experiences of this workforce, highlighting systemic changes needed to support those who care for and educate young children.

Workforce studies can illuminate critical challenges facing the field, such as low wages, minimal benefits, and high levels of stress and burnout. These factors may contribute to high turnover rates, making it difficult to provide consistent, high-quality care for children. By documenting these challenges, a workforce study builds a strong case for reforms such as wage supports, retention bonuses, and funding for health and wellness initiatives.

Workforce studies also examine the educational backgrounds and professional development experiences of early educators. This includes identifying gaps in credentials that may be due to barriers to accessing further education, such as cost, inflexible class schedules, and limited availability of credit-bearing training opportunities. These insights are vital in crafting policies that expand access to higher education, provide scholarships or loan forgiveness, and ensure that professional development opportunities are meaningful and accessible.

Another area a workforce study can address is compensation. The wages of a majority of the ECE workforce do not meet the minimum living wages indicated by national estimates. This evidence supports efforts to bring ECE compensation in line with that of K–12 teachers through salary scales, stipends, and tax credits.

In addition to identifying strengths and needs of the current workforce, workforce studies can help forecast future supply and demand. As states expand public pre-kindergarten or universal preschool, understanding trends in workforce exit, entry, and retirement is crucial. Workforce studies can inform planning efforts to support sustainable pipelines of new educators through initiatives such as apprenticeships or partnerships with higher education institutions.

This workforce study represents South Carolina’s efforts to use administrative data to produce annual workforce studies to allow policymakers to track the impact of policy interventions over time. Whether it's a new wage supplement program, credential requirement, or recruitment initiative, ongoing data collection can measure what’s working and where adjustments are needed. This feedback loop ensures that policies are responsive, effective, and grounded in the lived realities of the workforce.

Recommendations

- Explore year-to-year change in annual workforce studies using SC Endeavors data to better understand recruitment and retention patterns of early childhood educators
- Improve SC Endeavors Workforce Registry data quality through collaboration with other field agencies such as ABC Quality, Licensing, and other technical assistance agencies
- Triangulate SC Endeavors workforce data with other national sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, NAEYC and CSCCE Early Childhood Workforce Index to promote accurate understanding of the workforce
- Conduct case studies/research related to subsets or subfactors such as type of early care and education program or retention of educators by career level to understand needs and promote success
- Promote the use of accurate ECE workforce estimates in other state agencies addressing education, career, employment, and workforce development

References

1. California Early Care and Education Workforce Study - Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
2. South Carolina - May 2023 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates
3. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. (2023). Language Spoken at Home. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1601. Retrieved February 25, 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S1601?q=language>.

Questions

If you have any comments/feedback on this report, please get in touch with damico@mailbox.sc.edu.

Funded by the Division of Early Care & Education, SC Department of Social Services



SC Endeavors is funded by South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Appendix A: Early Care and Education Annual Training Report 2025

In 2025, early care and education (ECE) training efforts demonstrated substantial reach and engagement across two main training types: certified and registered. Certified and registered training is classified by trainer types, which can be registered, certified, or certified content specialists. The latter two are required to hold a four-year degree and are recognized in the SC Endeavors system as having a higher quality designation. Registered trainers, on the other hand, have no pre-qualification requirements but must maintain an active registry account and verify their education with the system. All training offered in the state undergoes a course approval process that ensures clear learning objectives, alignment with SC Early Learning Standards, an instructional plan, and evaluation and follow-up to gather feedback from training participants. A similar process is in place for training offered through conferences. Registered training accounted for the majority of activity, offering 3,440 events with 234,747 participants.

Table 10: 2025 ECE Training Events Offered, Hours Completed, and Participants

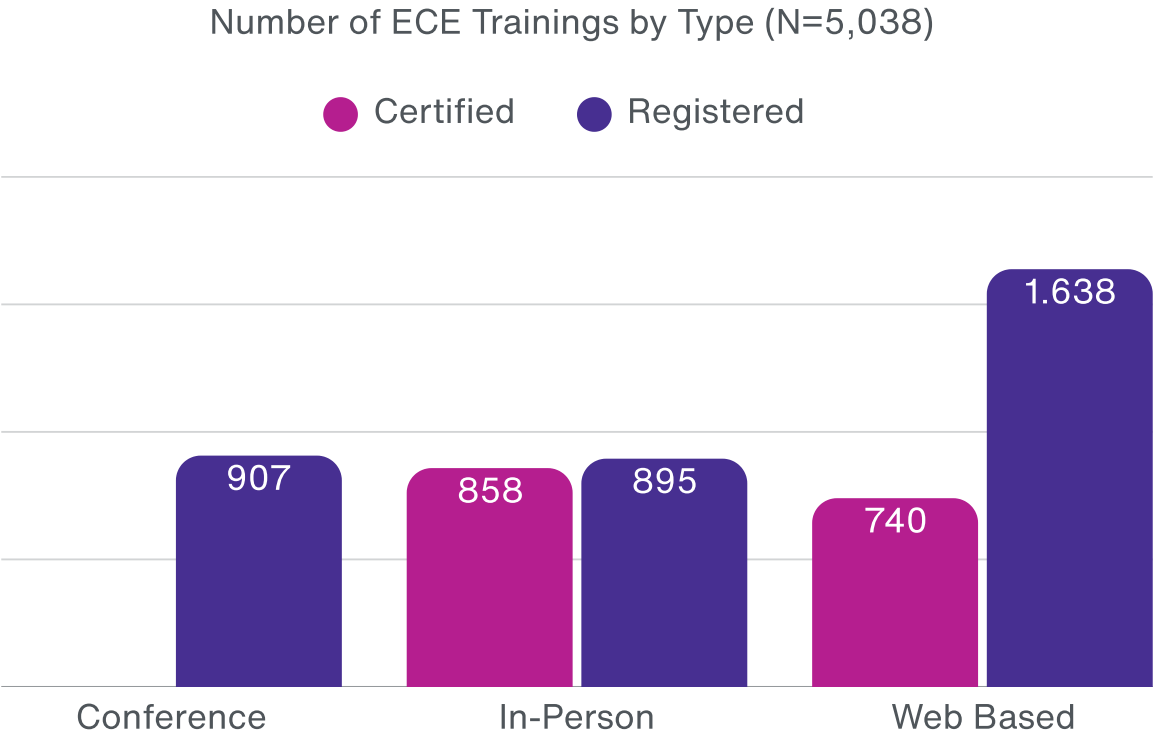
Course Type	Events Held	Hours Completed	Participants
Certified	1,598	64,591	35,161
Registered	3,440	422,975	234,747
Total	5,038	487,566	269,908

Table 11: 2025 ECE Training Events by Type and Format

Course Type	Events Held
Certified In-Person	858
Registered In-Person	895
Certified Web-Based	740
Registered Web-Based	1,638
Registered Conference	907
Total	5,038

ECE training opportunities were delivered across a range of formats and settings, reflecting the field’s flexibility in meeting professional development needs. Figure 10 details training by location. Web-based certified and registered courses had the greatest reach, with 2,378 trainings offered, demonstrating the popularity and accessibility of online learning. In-person training included 1,753 events. Conferences also played a significant role, with 907 sessions.

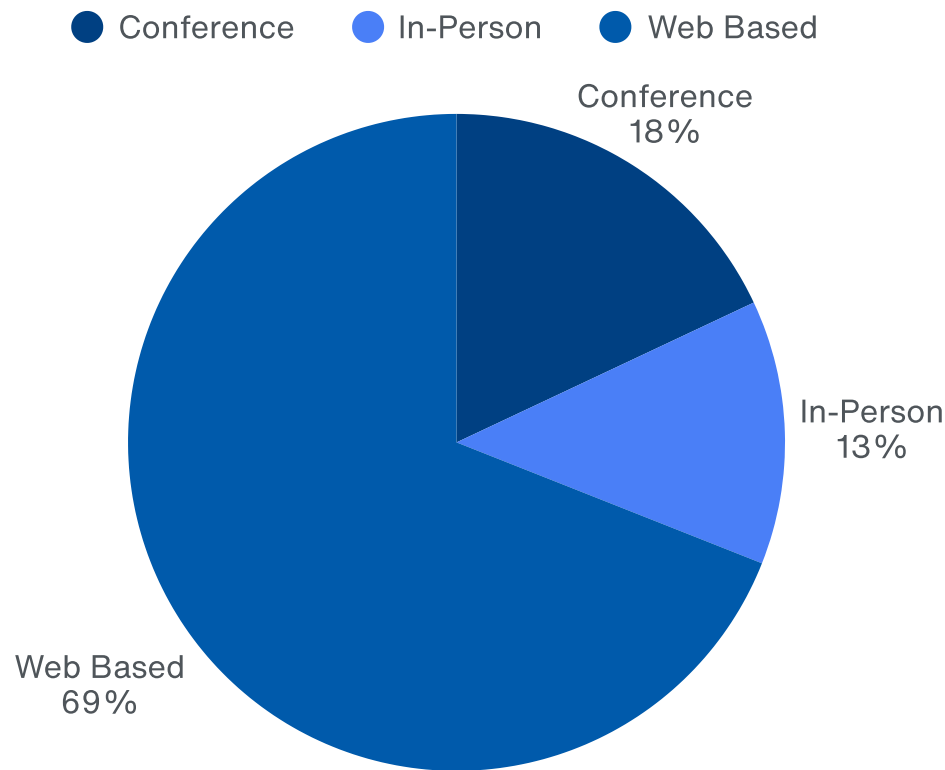
Figure 10: ECE Trainings by Training Format: Conference, In-Person, or Web Based



Attendance data across early care and education (ECE) training demonstrate the popularity of differing formats. Web-based training consistently attracted the highest participation, with 185,831 attendees—highlighting the accessibility and popularity of online learning. Conference sessions were attended by 49,791 and in-person trainings were attended by 34,286. Overall, the data reflect a strong preference for flexible, web-based learning while also emphasizing the continued importance of conferences and in-person training throughout the year.

Figure 11: Percent of ECE Participants by Training Format: Conference, In-Person, or Web Based

Percentages of Participants by Training Format (N=269,908)



Topics of training varied with eight predominate topic areas covered in 2025. Curriculum was the most frequently offered topic (1,154 events) followed by the topic of professional development (1,090 events). Child growth and development, health and safety, child guidance, and program administration were offered frequently. Nutrition and special needs were the least frequently offered topics; however, there were 244 events focused on nutrition and 125 focused on special needs.

Table 12: 2025 ECE Trainings Events by Topic

Training Topic	Events Held	Training Topic	Events Held
Curriculum	1,154	Program Administration	495
Professional Development	1,090	Nutrition	244
Child Growth and Development	750	Special Needs	125
Health and Safety	672	Total	5,038
Child Guidance	508		



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