Florida Office of Early Learning

Florida Statewide Early Care and Education Workforce Study

JANUARY 2013

Children's FORUM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Child Care Center
As defined by sections 403.302(2) and 402.308(1), Florida Statutes, any child care center or child care arrangement that provides child care for more than five children, unrelated to the operator and that receives a payment, fee, or grant for any of the children receiving care, wherever operated, and whether or not operated for profit; which must be licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
A free, statewide service that helps families identify and select quality early learning programs. The CCR&R State Network Office, which is responsible for administration of CCR&R services, develops training, educational materials, and other resources for early learning coalitions, families, and child care providers and is housed in the Office of Early Learning. The CCR&R State Network Office also maintains a statewide provider information database.

Certificates and Credentials

Florida Director Credential (Levels I, II and Advanced; 5 year renewal)
Every licensed Florida child care facility is required to have a credential director. Director Credential core requirements include: High school diploma or GED, Part I Introductory Child Care Training, 8-hours of in-service training serving children with disabilities, an active Staff Credential.

Level I - Completion of core requirements and an approved Overview of Child Care Management course for 3 credits or 4.5 CEUs, or Director Credential issued by another state.

Level II - Completion of core requirements and an approved Overview of Child Care Management course for 3 credits or 4.5 CEUs or Director Credential issued by another state, and a minimum of one year experience as an on-site child care director.

Advanced Level - Completion of core requirements and an approved Overview of Child Care Management course for 3 credits or 4.5 CEUs or Director Credential issued by another state, a minimum of two years experience as an on-site child care director, AND completion of ONE of the following:

- Associate degree or higher
- Completion of two 3-hour approved college courses.

Florida Staff Credential (5 Year Renewal)
A Staff Credential is an official designation that indicates an individual's professional education meets or exceeds the professional criteria set by the Department of Children and Families. Every licensed child care facility must have one member of its child care personnel present with a verified staff credential for every 20 children.

The Staff Credential requirement can be met in several ways:

National Early Childhood Certificate
National programs that are recognized in at least 5 states and meet or exceed the programmatic requirements qualify for the National Early Childhood Certificate, including the following: Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associate (CDA) (Initial 3-year renewal with subsequent 5-year renewals); National Child Care Association; Association Montessori International (AMI); American Montessori Society (AMS); Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

Formal Educational Qualifications
a) BA, BS or advanced degree in ONE of the following areas: Early Childhood Education/Child Development, Pre-Kindergarten or Primary Education, Preschool Education, Family and Consumer Sciences (formerly Home Economics/Child Development), Exceptional Student Education, Special Education, Mental Disabilities, Specific Learning Disabilities, Physically

Impaired, Varying Exceptionalities, Emotional Disabilities, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Speech-Language Pathology or Elementary Education with certification to teach any age birth through 6th grade (certification may be inactive provided the certificate is not suspended/revoked).

b) AS or AA degree or higher in Early Childhood Education/Child Development.

c) Associate's degree or higher WITH at least six (6) college credit hours in early childhood education/child development AND at least 480 hours experience in a child care setting serving children ages birth through eight (8).

Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC)
Formerly known as the Child Development Associate Equivalent (CDAE) credential. Pursuant to section 402.305(3)(b), Florida Statutes, the FCCPC is a Florida Department of Children and Families approved training program that consists of a minimum of 120 hours of early childhood instruction and 480 contact hours with children ages birth through eight (8) and at least two (2) methods of formal assessment. The FCCPC training program offers two (2) areas of certification: "Birth Through Five (formerly the department approved CDA Equivalency training programs)" and "School-Age (formerly the Florida School-Age Certification)."

Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC)
An educational credential issued by the Florida Department of Education (DOE), the ECPC, formally known as the Child Development Associate Equivalent (CDAE), is obtained by completing the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. Students who complete Occupational Completion Point A of the ECE program and pass the required Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) exams with a score of 70 or better will have completed the DCF 40 hour Introductory Child Care Training. Students who complete the ECE program and meet all other requirements for the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) as outlined in the Student Guidelines can be awarded the ECPC. The DOE ECPC is a Preschool specialization.

Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate (CCAC)
An education credential issued by the FDOE, the CCAC is obtained by completing the DOE Child Care Apprenticeship Program. The Apprenticeship Certificate designates a student as a Child Care Development Specialist.

Child Care WAGE$®
A licensed program created by the Child Care Services Association in North Carolina. Through this program, teachers receive a salary supplement paid directly to them on a semi-annual basis provided they have remained with their employer for the previous six months and earn less than $17.50 per hour. The amount of the supplement is determined using an incremental scale from the first educational level up to the highest educational level requiring an advanced degree in early childhood or child development. Each level specifies a level of education or continuing course work toward degrees with an accompanying supplement amount.

Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs
A wide array of child care and education programs that serve children, ages birth through five including, but not limited to, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start, public schools, prekindergarten and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs provided by non-public school providers, religious exempt child care programs, and private/parochial school prekindergarten and after school programs, School Readiness Programs, private child care centers, and family child care homes.

Early Head Start (EHS)
A federally-funded, community-based program for low-income families with infants, toddlers and pregnant women, which includes goals to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, to enhance the development of very young children, and to promote healthy family functioning.

Early Learning Coalition (Coalition)
Part of a system of statutorily-authorized local entities in Florida that implement early learning programs at the local level including the School Readiness Program, Voluntary Prekindergarten Program, and Child Care Resource and Referral. Each early learning coalition implements an Office of Early Learning approved plan that includes a comprehensive program of services enhancing the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures. Each early learning coalition is governed by a board whose members are appointed in accordance with the requirements of statutes.

Family Child Care Home (FCCH)
A family day care home is an occupied residence in which child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated families and which receives a payment, fee, or grant for any of the children receiving care, whether or not operated for profit. § 402.302(8), Florida Statutes. (2010). Includes family day care homes and large family child care homes.

Head Start
A national school readiness program that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to three- and four-year-old children from low-income families.

Hard-to-Reach Population Indicator
Programs meeting one or more of three risk factors derived from 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data: located in a city/county with 25% or more of the population at or below the federal poverty line; located in a city/county with 33% or more of the population speaking a language other than English; and/or located in rural areas. Rural areas encompass all populations, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. Urban areas are classified into two groups: Urbanized Areas of 50,000 or more people and Urban Clusters of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B
A federal program that requires states to provide free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities from ages three through twenty-one. Eligibility criteria are mandated through federal and state regulations, and services are supported with public funds. The Prekindergarten Program for Children with Disabilities (the preschool component of Part B, Section 619 of IDEA) is provided by the local school district to meet the child's unique needs for specially-designed instruction and related services, ages three through five. School districts may serve children beginning on their third birthday or in the school year in which they turn three. Eligibility for special education is based on criteria in State Board of Education rules.

Lead Teacher
A teacher in a program who bears primary responsibility for planning, preparing, implementing and evaluating developmentally appropriate activities and routines as well as providing care for physical needs of children, supervising and evaluating assistant classroom staff, maintaining a safe and sanitary environment, and performing related work.

Migrant Head Start
A federally-funded community-based program serving the children of migrant farm workers while their parents are at work. Child care centers that serve this population are open for varying lengths of time during the year, depending largely on the harvest activities in the area.

Random Sampling
Non-systematic participant selection method whereby all cases in the population (or sampling frame) have an equal opportunity to be selected for participation.

Religious Exempt Child Care Facilities
A child care facility may claim Religious Exemption from licensure if: it is an integral part of a church or parochial school conducting regularly scheduled classes, courses of study or educational programs; it is accredited by, or by a member of, an organization that publishes and requires compliance with its standards for health, safety and sanitation; and it meets background screening requirements in sections 402.305, 402.316, and 435.04, Florida Statutes.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program
Provides scholarships for early care educators and center directors to work towards earning an associate's degree or credentials in early childhood education. It is funded by the Office of Early Learning and administered by Children's Forum, Inc. It involves a three-way partnership for the sharing of expenses by the caregiver receiving the scholarship, the sponsoring child care center or family day care home and the T.E.A.C.H Program.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program
Constitutionally mandated entitlement program begun in 2005 designed to prepare all eligible four-year-olds in Florida for kindergarten. Eligibility includes being four years old on or before September 1st of the school year and being a resident of Florida. The VPK program elements include high literacy standards, accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes, and qualified instructors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Many states in the nation have conducted early care and education (ECE) workforce studies over the past two decades to gather information about ECE practitioners in order to make improvements in both policy and practice. Research is conclusive that children who receive higher quality care in their early years are more successful in their formal school years as well as in life. High quality care has been repeatedly linked to positive developmental outcomes for children, including cognitive, social, and emotional development (Helburn, 1995; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; Peisner-Feinberg, et al., 1999; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). In addition, children who receive consistent, nurturing, and stimulating care in their first five years are found to become more productive citizens who contribute to society through higher employment rates and avoidance of the criminal justice system, teen pregnancy, and drug dependency issues (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Reynolds, et al., 2007; Schweinhart, et al., 2005).

This report presents the findings of the 2012 Florida Statewide Early Care and Education Workforce Study funded by the Florida Office of Early Learning on behalf of the Florida State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. To inform the development and enhancement of a quality ECE system in the state of Florida, comprehensive information about the ECE workforce was gathered including demographic and program characteristics regarding providers and practitioners, job satisfaction and turnover rates, wage and benefit information about the workforce, professional development opportunities and needs, and technology access and needs, among other data. Data were obtained from existing state and national sources as well as from stakeholders in the ECE field including program administrators, teachers and support staff, and family child care home (FCCH) providers. The following key research questions guided this study:

Research Questions

Demographic Characteristics
1. What are the demographic characteristics of Florida's ECE workforce personnel, including owners/operators, directors, lead teachers, teacher assistants and aides, and support personnel?

Program Characteristics
2. What types of federal or state programs are offered as part of the part-day or full-day services?
3. What number or percentages of programs/employers participate in a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)?

Employment Characteristics
4. What are the wages and benefits earned by individuals in the ECE workforce?
5. What is the status of workforce job satisfaction rates, including turnover and job stress issues?

Education Status
6. What is the educational attainment of Florida's ECE workforce?

Professional Development Training
7. What types of informal training opportunities have individuals in the ECE workforce accessed?
8. What types of formal training opportunities have individuals in the ECE workforce accessed?

Professional Development Barriers
9. What are the challenges/barriers that may be preventing the workforce from accessing the available professional development opportunities?

Technology
10. What are the perceived technology needs, comfort levels, abilities, and resources of ECE programs and practitioners?

Methods

Data Collection.

Existing state and national data as well as survey, interview, and focus group data were obtained for this study. Specifically, U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data for the child care and related workforces in the state of Florida were compared with that of similar states as well as the nation on size, earnings, growth, and turnover characteristics. Survey data were collected from practitioners employed at randomly sampled ECE programs throughout Florida. The survey data supplement the BLS data to yield comprehensive data describing the ECE workforce in terms of demographic characteristics, educational status and experience, program characteristics, professional development supports and needs, and technology access and needs.

The Florida Statewide Early Care and Education Workforce Surveys developed for this study encompassed three separate surveys designed to capture perceptual data from key practitioner groups: Administrator Survey (completed by administrators at ECE facilities), Teacher and Support Staff Survey (completed by all staff at ECE facilities), and Family Child Care Home Provider Survey (completed by FCCH owners). Three interview and focus group guides were also developed and used to collect in-depth qualitative data from a sub-group of practitioners: Administrator Interview Guide, FCCH Owner Interview Guide, and Instructional Staff Focus Group Guide.

Sampling Procedures.

Stratified random sampling was used to select survey participants. Only those practitioners at a randomly sampled group of ECE programs could participate in the survey but participation was voluntary so any program or practitioner could also decline participation. A sub-sample of the survey programs was randomly selected for interview participation. Administrators or FCCH owners from those sites were asked to participate in an interview regarding their experiences and needs in the ECE field. A group of instructional staff participating in a traditionally well-attended statewide ECE conference was asked to participate in a focus group to capture in-depth qualitative information on the experiences and needs of teaching staff in the ECE field. This method was used in lieu of conducting focus groups at the same sites randomly selected for administrator interviews to minimize potential burden on program sites that would have otherwise needed to provide classroom coverage for multiple teachers.

Outreach Efforts to Achieve Target Response Rates.

Outreach efforts to ensure targeted response rates were conducted following initial survey distribution and included sending out reminder emails and reminder post-cards, making reminder telephone calls, and utilizing existing ECE networks. The research team made a telephone reminder call to each "hard-to-reach" program (defined by high poverty concentration, rural/urban location, and high bilingual concentration) and nearly all programs including those not identified as hard-to-reach as well. Letters were sent to ECE community agencies, organizations, and service providers requesting their support in encouraging participation and reminding selected program sites to participate. These organizations and agencies were very helpful in getting the word out about the study and encouraging participation. The research team prepared flyers to pass out at conferences and other venues to increase awareness of the study. Additionally, satellite office staff assisted in outreach efforts to encourage participation in the study. Program sites participating in the survey were entered into a raffle drawing for the chance to receive a package of classroom supplies for their program, and interview and focus group participants each received a package of classroom supplies as a token of appreciation for participation.

Response Rates.

The population of ECE providers throughout the state as determined by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) master program site database included 13,065 program sites (DCF, 2012). These sites included child care centers, public and private schools, and FCCHs. From this population, a sample of 2,279 programs was randomly selected for survey participation. The survey response rate for this study was 25% and included 271 child care centers, 30 schools, 46 religious exempt programs, and 187 FCCHs. The group

of program sites responding to the survey was representative of the population on a number of key characteristics (i.e., program characteristics such as Head Start, Migrant Head Start, VPK, schools, centers, religious exempt, FCCHs; services offered such as afterschool and special education services; regional location; urban/rural status; and neighborhood demographics such as poverty and bilingual concentration).

Sample Representativeness.
For this study, the representative sample size needed for the population at a 95% confidence interval and 5% error rate was determined to be 373.[1] The overall respondent sample size achieved was 569. The survey respondent sample has a similar demographic and programmatic make-up as the population on a number of factors. At the same time, this is not an experimental study and there are many factors that cannot be measured or controlled on which the survey sample may differ from the ECE population in Florida. In voluntary survey research, those individuals choosing to respond to a survey are likely different in some ways from those who choose not to respond making it difficult to generalize the findings beyond the group responding.

Also, the respondent sample sizes for sub-groups (e.g., program types and regions), were not sufficiently large for making generalizations for sub-groups with a high degree of confidence (within a 95% confidence interval). This does not mean findings should not be considered at the sub-group levels but rather that a greater degree of caution is warranted when generalizing to the sub-group for making inferences and policy decisions. Also, comparing rates across groups should be done with caution because percentages from small samples vary more widely so that there may appear to be a large difference between groups that is likely an artifact of large variation in sample size. More information regarding sample representativeness is discussed in the Study Considerations section of the Executive Summary and throughout the report.

Findings

The findings of the Florida ECE Workforce Study are threefold. The first set of findings presented is existing labor statistics data for Florida

relative to the nation and select comparable states (California, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas). The second set of findings includes results from the three surveys: Administrator Survey, Teacher and Support Staff Survey, and FCCH Owner Survey. The final set of findings includes qualitative findings from the interview and focus groups. Analytical techniques used for this study included descriptive statistics for survey analysis and existing data (i.e., frequency, percentage, mean, median, standard deviations, and ranges) and qualitative analysis of interview and focus group data (deriving common themes). A summary of key findings from each set of findings follows.

Section 1. Analysis of Early Care and Education Workforce Data Comparing Florida with California, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas

Size of the Workforce.
For the occupation of Childcare Worker (according to the North American Industry Classification System; NAICS), Florida has 35,430 workers in the occupation. California and Texas have 1.7 and 1.5 times as many Childcare Workers (60,290 and 53,860, respectively), but Florida exceeds the other two comparison states. North Carolina reports 21,350 and Minnesota reports 8,570 in the Childcare Worker occupation.

For Childcare Workers in the state of Florida, four metro areas account for three-fourths of the total number employed (26,370 of 35,430 total). These areas are:

- Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach FL
- Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater FL
- Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall FL Metropolitan Division
- Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford FL

Earnings.
Childcare Workers in Florida earn an average of $20,160 annually. The median annual wage is $19,140. In comparison, Florida has a lower pay rate for this occupation relative to the national average and two of the four comparison states.

The highest wages (mean annual wage) in Florida are in:

- Lakeland-Winter Haven FL ($22,530)
- Ocala FL ($21,850)
- Sebastian-Vero Beach FL ($21,700)
- Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL ($21,550)
- Naples-Marco Island FL ($21,320)
- Gainesville FL ($21,220)
- Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville FL ($21,150)

The lowest wages (mean annual wage) in Florida are in:

- Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent FL ($18,910)
- Panama City-Lynn Haven-Panama City Beach FL ($18,600)
- Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall FL Metropolitan Division ($18,590)

Comparing early care and education occupations within Florida, the 35,430 Childcare Workers in Florida have a lower annual mean wage and annual median wage than other comparable positions of Teacher Assistants (41,400 employed in Florida), Preschool Teachers except Special Education (18,130 employed in Florida), and Kindergarten Teachers Except Special Education (10,880 employed in Florida). For comparable positions, Florida is also lower than two of the four comparison states for Teaching Assistants and Kindergarten Teachers (except Special Education), and lower than three of the four comparison states for Preschool Teachers (except Special Education).

New Hires and Turnover.
Florida has more new hires than all the comparison states except Texas. Overall, Florida reported a turnover rate of 11.5% in Child Day Care Services for 2011. Minnesota and Texas were higher at 12.7% each, while California was considerably lower at 8.5% and North Carolina was about the same at 11.4%. It is important to note that most workforce studies typically calculate turnover based on the number of staff leaving their program during the year. Conversely, turnover as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau is equal to the number of workers hired by an establishment to replace those workers who have left in a given period of time. It is calculated by summing the number of stable hires and separations, and dividing by the average full-quarter employment. This accounts for the differences in the reported turnover rates in the studies used for comparative purposes. Both are accurate but reflect differences in how they are defined, calculated, and reported.

Section 2: Survey Data Findings

A total of 330 unique individuals responded to the Administrator Survey (representing 318 programs), 187 unique owners responded to the FCCH Survey, and 348 staff responded to the Teacher and Support Staff Survey. Survey findings are presented throughout the report by position type (administrators, FCCH providers, and teachers and support staff), program type (centers, schools, religious exempt, and FCCHs), and region (Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southern, and Suncoast). A summary of the survey findings follows. It is important to bear in mind that these findings may not generalize to the ECE population in Florida because of the voluntary nature of the survey.

Demographics.
The demographics of the ECE workforce responding to the survey can be characterized as:

- Primarily female (97%).
- Typically at least 30 years old.
- Over 40% White (43%) with equal distributions (27%) of African American and Hispanic.
  - Race by Program Type: Administrators are more likely to be White, especially administrators at schools. African American race is more prevalent among FCCH owners (42%) whereas Hispanic race is most prevalent among staff (38%) relative to other respondent groups.
  - Race by Region: Administrators (83%) and staff (60%) in the Northwest region are more likely to be White. Administrators and staff in the Southern (58% for administrators and 61% for staff) and Southeast (24% for administrators and 56% for staff) regions have the highest rates of Hispanic. Rates of reporting African American are highest in the Northeast for administrators (29%) and staff (38%) and in the Northwest for staff (40%).

- The majority of the workforce is fluent in English (87%) with just over one-quarter of the workforce being fluent in Spanish.

  - Language by Program Type: A larger percentage of staff (37%) relative to administrators (18%) and FCCH owners (19%) speaks Spanish fluently. Center-based administrators and FCCH owners report higher rates (20%) of speaking Spanish fluently as compared to administrators at school- and religious exempt programs (10%).

  - Language by Region: The largest percentage of Spanish-speaking practitioners is in the Southeast and Southern regions. A sizable percentage of the Florida ECE workforce is bilingual especially in the Southern part of the state.

Program Characteristics.
The majority of respondents are licensed, center-based for-profit programs. Family child care providers comprised approximately 40% of the sample. Approximately half of the programs represented have been in business for 10 or more years with the remainder having fewer years experience. Statewide, almost half (46%) of ECE programs are accredited or working toward accreditation with over one-quarter (28%) also holding a Gold Seal certificate. One-third of programs participate in a QRIS which are only available in some counties and administered through eleven early learning coalitions throughout the state. Child care centers represent the largest percentage of programs participating in a QRIS followed by FCCH programs. Schools and religious exempt providers represent only a small portion.

Program participation and funding streams of ECE programs can be described as follows:

- Slightly more than half of programs are VPK providers (56%).

- Before and afterschool services are provided by 29% with fewer offering services such as Head Start (6%), Early Head Start (5%), Title I (8%), Birth to Three Disabilities (6%), and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) afterschool (.3%).

- More than half (57%) serve school readiness eligible children.

- Approximately 40% access the USDA Child Care Food Program to provide healthy and nutritious meals and a majority of respondents rely on parent tuition to support their programs.

- A majority (56%) of programs receives tuition payments.

Children Served.
Across programs, just over 50% of programs serve infants. The most prevalent age groups served across ECE programs are toddlers and preschool age children. As would be expected, facilities are more likely to offer VPK services than FCCHs. Many owners choose not to offer VPK services because state regulations governing the VPK program limit enrollment to four VPK children in FCCH. Infants and toddlers are served at a higher percentage of centers and FCCHs relative to schools or religious exempt programs.

There is great variation in the number of children served by age group across facilities which is highly tied to the size of the facility and number of slots available to serve children of various age groups. According to administrator reports, only about one-quarter or less of all facilities sampled serve children with disabilities (28%), children with limited English skills (13%), and children of migrant families (4%). Family child care homes served children in these categories even less frequently, with 11% serving children with disabilities, 6% serving children with limited English skills, and 1% serving children from migrant families. Thirty-five percent of individual teachers are serving children with disabilities, 37% are serving children with limited English skills, and 25% are serving children from migrant families.

Longevity and Work Hours.
In terms of years spent in the field, administrators and FCCH owners have spent an average of 17 to 18 years in the field. FCCH owners have been overseeing their current site longer than administrators (for an average of 12 relative to 7 years) which would be expected since they are working in their homes. Teachers and staff have lower rates of longevity with an average of 10 years in the field and about 6 years on average at their current site.

FCCH owners work the longest hours (average of 52 hours per week), followed by

administrators (average of 46 hours per week) and then the teachers and staff (average of 37 hours per week). Family child care home owners typically work longer hours because they are the sole managers of their programs and must perform all functions such as food shopping, meal preparation, and daily maintenance in addition to working with the children in their care. Family child care homes also often provide longer hours of child care per day for the convenience of the families they serve. Additionally, classroom personnel are typically hourly wage earners who earn higher wages for over-time hours, making scheduled hours over 40 hours per week unlikely in programs with limited budgets.

Earnings.
Earnings reported throughout this report vary somewhat depending on the data source largely because of differences in sampling procedures and how a childcare provider is defined. Appendix I of this report provides specific definitions for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. However, regardless of the source, data show that Florida's child care providers are typically making low wages across position levels. Based on survey self-reporting, the average annual salary for administrators is $35,027 and the median annual salary is $31,200. Administrators in child care settings are typically responsible for the overall facility maintenance, hiring and supervision of staff, parent relations, program compliance, curriculum, equipment, and overall operations. These responsibilities are similar to those of elementary school principals though size, scope and educational qualifications required may vary considerably. The average salary for an elementary school principal in Florida in 2010-2011 was $85,200 according to the Florida Department of Education (2011). Administrators in child care settings earn approximately 59% less than elementary school principals.

Lead teachers earn an average of $10.80 per hour and median of $10.00 per hour. The annualized salaries are $22,464 and $20,800 respectively. Interestingly, specialists earned more than administrators in the sample and typically include positions such as curriculum specialists, program coordinators, etc. This is likely due to the educational and experience

requirements of these types of positions and the need to compete with other potential employers for similarly educated and experienced staff.

Those who work in large family child care facilities (and are not the FCCH owners) earn an average of $8.67 per hour and a median wage of $8.00. This equates to $18,034 and $16,000 respectively. Practitioners working in family child care settings earn the least of those positions directly responsible for the care and education of young children.

According to survey data, slightly higher salaries were reported in the southern regions as compared to the central and northern regions of Florida.

Job Satisfaction.
Overall, perceived job satisfaction is relatively high for ECE practitioners. Administrators have the highest job satisfaction rates (97% very/somewhat satisfied) followed by FCCH owners (92% very/somewhat satisfied). Satisfaction rates for teachers and staff are lower at 82%. However, very few practitioners reported actually being dissatisfied (ranging from three to nine individuals across position types). Most practitioners who are not very or somewhat satisfied with their job report feeling neutral about their current job.

Most (85% or more) teachers agreed ("strongly" or "somewhat") that:
- My director is supportive and encouraging (90%)
- My director lets staff members know what is expected of them (90%)
- I feel supported by my colleagues to try out new ideas (87%)
- I can count on most co-workers to help out even though it may not be part of their job (86%)
- There is a great deal of cooperation among co-workers (86%)
- Employees are constantly learning and seeking new ideas (85%)

As for program type, job satisfaction rates are somewhat higher at facilities (ranging from 96% to 98%) relative to FCCHs (92%). As for regional differences, teachers in the Southern region are most satisfied (89%). Those in the Central and Southeast regions have lower rates of satisfaction and higher rates of neutrality

compared to other regions. The Suncoast region has the highest number of dissatisfied teachers although the rate is still relatively low (n = 5; 6% report somewhat dissatisfied).

Eighty-five percent of teachers indicate that they expect to remain in their current position or move into a higher position at their place of employment. The remainder will look for a different job or further their education. Six percent intend to remain in-field whereas 5% report plans to leave the ECE field. By region, there is some variation in the percentage of teachers that expect to remain in their current or higher position ranging from 75% to 94% with the highest in the Northeast region and lowest in the Southeast region.

The following factors most often influence staff decisions to change jobs:
- Low wages (79%)
- Lack of benefits (55%)
- Inflexible hours (26%)
- Burnout (24%)

According to administrators, the most prevalent turnover reasons experienced at facilities are:
- Got another job offer that better fit their needs (24%)
- Moved out of the area (17%)
- Family Issues (16%)
- Went to work at a different child care center (15%)
- Low wages and/or benefits (13%)
- Staying home with their own children (10%)

Turnover and Retention.
Turnover rates based on the Florida Statewide ECE Survey data captures the percentage of program sites across the state that had at least one teacher/provider leave their site over the past year. These rates do not take into consideration the number of staff employed at a given site or reasons for leaving. What the survey turnover rate offers is an overall statewide picture of teaching staff turnover experienced by children at ECE program sites regardless of the reasons for turnover or the overall turnover rate at a given program site. Note that Child Care Worker data from NAICS do not include practitioners employed at all of the program types participating in the Florida Statewide ECE Workforce Survey and timeframes and other factors differ across the various data sources. For these reasons, survey

turnover rates will be different and typically higher than turnover rates reported in the BLS or other data sources.

Almost 60% of facilities had at least one staff member leaving over the past year. Rates and reasons for turnover are generally similar for centers and schools except that the percentage of programs experiencing turnover due to insufficient wages and/or benefits was lower at schools relative to other facilities (4% as compared to 12% to 14%). In general, religious exempt programs report lower rates of turnover as compared to other types of facilities. Across regions, the lowest turnover rate is found in the Southern region with 49% of programs experiencing staff turnover and an average of one person leaving over the past year compared to 58% to 70% of programs experiencing turnover and an average of two people leaving across the other regions. Turnover rates may be positively impacted by the scholarship and wage incentive programs available in Miami-Dade County (the largest county represented in the Southern region).

Teachers and staff are least satisfied with their wages (44%) and benefits (40%) which likely impacts turnover. In five of the six regions, half or more of the teachers indicated low satisfaction with wages (with Suncoast as the exception). In four of the six regions, half or more indicated low satisfaction with benefits such as health insurance (with Southern and Suncoast as the exceptions).

The survey results show that health coverage is very limited for the ECE workforce.
- Just over one-third of administrators (37%) report having access to paid health coverage, either fully paid or partially paid through their center/program, while 56% indicate that health care coverage is not available.
- Almost half (46%) of FCCH owners report that they did not have health care coverage from any source. For 28%, their spouse provides full coverage (24%) or partial coverage (4%). Six percent have full or partial coverage through their FCCH business. Nine percent are covered by Medicare or Medicaid.
- Staff survey results mirrored the administrators report of coverage—with 37% saying their health care coverage is

fully or partially paid and 48% reporting none is available. The remainder (15%) said coverage was available but not paid by the employer. Regarding FCCH child care provider staff, almost all (90%) of FCCH owners reported that health care coverage is not available for their child care providers. Only 3% say coverage is fully paid. The remainder (7%) says coverage is available but not paid.

To help reduce turnover and improve retention of staff, it may be useful to understand the factors that most impact an ECE program site's ability to retain practitioners. The top three factors that would most help directors and FCCH owners continue at their program are:

- For facilities:
  1. Better pay
  2. Easier time finding/keeping qualified staff
  3. Better benefits

- For FCCHs:
  1. Better/Available benefits
  2. Easier time enrolling enough children
  3. More opportunities for professional growth

Factors most positively influencing a teacher's decision to remain the ECE field include:

- Children that I enjoy working with (92%)
- Pleasant relationship with co-workers (92%)
- Good relationship with the director (91%)
- A competent director (90%)
- Employer's reputation in the community (90%)

In addition to wages and health benefits, other benefits are also offered to staff. The following staff benefits are most frequently available to staff at facilities according to administrators:

- Paid holidays (68%)
- Adult size bathrooms (66%)
- Paid vacation/personal days (62%)
- Annual evaluation (60%)
- Written personnel policies available to the employee (52%)
- Paid sick days (50%)

According to teachers and support staff, the most frequent benefits available are:

- Paid holidays (69%)
- Paid vacation/personal days (59%)
- Flexible work schedules (58%)
- Emphasis on good working relationships/ teamwork (51%)

Education Status.
Eighty-four percent of administrators hold a Director Credential issued by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). At center-based facilities the rate is even higher at 90%. It is not surprising that this percentage is high given that all center-based directors are required by DCF to hold a Director Credential. Most but not all of the Administrator Survey respondents at centers are the director which would explain why the percentage is not 100%. When examining only those individuals that reported being the director of child care centers, 97% reported holding a staff credential or having a bachelor's degree. Rates of holding the National Child Development Associate (CDA) credential ranges from 34% to 40% with staff reporting the highest rates relative to administrators and FCCH owners. Between 19% and 25% of staff hold the Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) or the Staff Credential issued by DCF.

Across position groups (administrators, staff, and FCCH owners), rates of holding certificates and credentials tend to be consistently higher in the Southeast and Southern regions. These findings are likely best understood in the context of participation rates for wage and scholarship incentive programs which are higher in the Southern region of the state where such programs are more widely available to practitioners. (See the Glossary of Terms for a complete explanation of the child care credential structure in Florida).

Most survey respondents report having a high school diploma and at least some college credits or a degree: 91% of administrators, 78% of staff and 68% of FCCH owners. The percentage of practitioners reporting not having a high school diploma is low ranging from one to four percent across respondent groups. Nine percent of administrators, 20% of staff, and 28% of FCCH owners have a high school diploma but no college level education. One quarter

of administrators has a four-year degree and 15% have a graduate degree as their highest education level. Rates of holding either a 2- or 4-year degree range from 14% to 16% for staff and FCCH owners. Lead teachers are more likely than assistant teachers/teacher's aides to hold college degrees. School administrators tend to be more likely to have either a 4-year degree or graduate degree relative to administrators at other program types. At FCCH programs, the most prevalent level of highest education is having some college credits (35%). Rates of holding a high school diploma as the highest education level are higher for religious exempt (15%) and FCCH programs (20%) relative to center- and school-based programs (8% and 7% respectively). There are no discernible variations in the patterns for highest education level by region.

Given the importance of both professional development opportunities and wages to staff turnover, retention, and job satisfaction rates, the link between education level and hourly wage for teaching staff was examined. Findings showed that the rate of compensation for teaching staff increases with higher education up to the bachelor's degree level. This suggests that although overall salaries are low, education does make a difference. Those teachers that have higher levels of education tend to earn more than their less educated colleagues.

Trainings Attended.
Practitioners were asked to report on the types of trainings they have attended over the last five years and their perceived usefulness of those trainings. In-services provided on site, on-line trainings, and workshops and conferences are the three most accessed types of trainings across administrators, teaching staff, and FCCH owners. Consistent with educational preferences, on-line training is the most accessed type of training for administrators (90%) and FCCH owners (79%) whereas in-service training on-site is the most accessed type of training for staff (74%). However, the rates of attendance across these three most prevalent training types did not differ much for administrators or staff. The range for administrators is 81% to 89% and the range for staff is 68% to 74%. There is greater variation for FCCH owners with a

range of 40% to 79% participation rates across the three most attended training types. Also of note, approximately 30% of administrators and staff and 22% of FCCH owners have taken college credit courses toward a degree in the last 5 years. Fourteen percent of practitioners across groups have taken not-for-credit college courses over the past five years. Because FCCH owners are often the sole caregiver and business operator for their facilities, it is likely they have fewer opportunities to leave the workplace for training and still accomplish their work. One likely reason that administrators and teaching staff have participated in college courses more often than FCCH owners is due to state credential requirements for center-based personnel.

Overall, practitioners are generally positive in their ratings of the usefulness of the trainings they have received in the last five years. Although, as with participation rates, there is greater variation in usefulness ratings for FCCHs. The least useful training type reported across practitioner groups is not-for-credit college courses.

Supports for Professional Development and Retention.
The most frequently-provided type of opportunity available through ECE employers was on-site training (61%), followed by mentoring/coaching (42%) and participation in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program (T.E.A.C.H.; 31%). About one-fourth of the facilities provided tuition reimbursement (26%) and paid release time (26%) for professional development activities, while less than 20% of the programs offered help in securing funds for training (17%), paid training expenses (16%), or paid for books/travel (14%). When teaching staff respondents provided information on their professional development preferences, they indicated their most preferred training method was on-site training (47%), so it may be that administrators are responding to the preferences of their staff members by providing on-site training as the most frequently-provided type of professional development opportunity by the employer.

Participation in Child Care WAGE$® Florida (WAGE$) was included as an option on the survey; however, the WAGE$ program is currently available in only three Coalition

areas (Broward, Miami-Dade/Monroe, and Palm Beach) through local funding initiatives. As a result, the WAGE$ program is the least frequently-provided opportunity (10.4%) as reported by the administrators.

On-site training is reported by administrators as both the most frequently employer-offered opportunity (61%) and the most frequently received opportunity (52%) by the teaching staff. T.E.A.C.H. scholarships (38%) is the second most-frequently received opportunity, and about one-fourth of the teaching staff respondents receive paid training expenses (30%) and mentoring/coaching (25%) through their employer. Less than 15% of the respondents receive any of the other professional development opportunities offered through their employer. The results suggest that, beyond on-site training, the majority of practitioners working in facilities do not receive additional types of professional development opportunities from the employer.

It appears that practitioners working as employees in FCCHs have fewer opportunities to receive professional development compared to practitioners working in center-based sites. Because of the small number of responding FCCHs employing other providers, professional development opportunity data are not provided by region for FCCHs.

Notable program type differences included that schools tend to provide books/travel at a higher rate than centers and religious exempt facilities. T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are most frequently accessed by child care centers.

Regionally, there is a relatively higher percentage of centers accessing T.E.A.C.H. scholarships in the Northeast region relative to other regions. As expected given that tuition reimbursement, books/travel, and paid release time are required components of the T.E.A.C.H. program, rates for those items were also relatively high in the Northeast as well. However, the rate of teachers actually participating in the T.E.A.C.H. program was relatively low as reported by teachers. It may be that the teaching staff who responded to the survey were not the staff at their respective centers who have had a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, or the staff who have had scholarships may no longer be working at those centers.

Practitioners are generally aware of the professional development opportunities available to them and participate to some degree in T.E.A.C.H. and local scholarships. Outreach strategies to inform practitioner populations appear to be relatively successful with the sample. However, it should be reiterated that these findings must be considered in relation to the sample sizes across sub-groups. Considering the turnover of individuals working in early childhood programs statewide, ongoing efforts to engage, support and develop competent practitioners should be enhanced to meet the ongoing need for a fairly compensated, trained, and educated workforce to positively impact child outcomes.

Educational Preferences.
All three groups of practitioners (administrators, FCCH owners, and staff) most prefer evening time for attending trainings or college courses. Other relatively popular time choices include weekends for FCCH owners and mornings for staff. Family child care owners often do not have substitute caregivers available to come into their homes to care for children while they attend training during the day and may prefer evening or weekend training for this reason. Regarding types of professional development, on-line training is the most preferred method for administrators and FCCH owners whereas on-site training is the most preferred method for staff. Almost one-half of administrators (45%) and FCCH owners (46%) chose on-line training as their most preferred method compared to 20% of teaching staff. Conversely, almost one-half of teaching staff (47%) selected on-site training at their place of employment as their most favored option, while only 15% of administrators and 3% of FCCH owners made the same choice. Because they work at home, FCCH owners would not be expected to select on-site training. As for staff, while evening is the preferred time to attend training, staff also report family demands and lack of time as two predominate barriers to accessing professional development opportunities. It follows that on-site trainings would be their preference.

The preferred language for training and materials is typically English. Although, about 22% of practitioners prefer to receive instruction and materials in Spanish, almost all of whom are employed in the Southern region.

Training Topics of Interest.
Understanding the preferences of administrators, teaching staff and FCCH owners enables education and training organizations to tailor opportunities to specific audiences. In addition, each group views their needs and challenges through a different lens. Administrators typically view training from a wide angle reflective of the need to manage and administer programs for all children effectively. Teaching staff often view their training needs from a professional and personal perspective based on the care, education, and guidance of children in their respective classrooms. FCCH providers view their needs holistically both as administrators and teachers in a home setting. All perspectives are valuable in meeting the needs of children and families.

There is little variation in the preference of training topics by provider type or region. Overall there are consistent topics of high interest across position types.

The 10 topics ranking highest among administrators are:
- Positive discipline / behavior modification (62%)
- Business management / leadership (59%)
- Preschool-age development (51%)
- Curriculum development / lesson planning (51%)
- Building positive relationships with parents (50%)
- Literacy development / reading skills (49%)
- Early math / science (48%)
- Creative play (music and movement) (47%)
- Social / emotional development (44%)
- Learning through play (44%)

The 10 topics ranking highest among teaching staff are:
- Positive discipline / behavior modification (54%)
- Social / emotional development (51%)
- Learning through play (44%)
- Literacy development / reading skills (44%)
- Curriculum development / lesson planning (44%)
- Classroom management (43%)
- Health and safety (41%)
- Preschool-age development (41%)

- Building positive relationships with parents (40%)
- Nutrition (40%)

The 10 topics ranking highest among FCCH owners are:
- Infant and toddler development (60%)
- Creative play (music and movement) (58%)
- Preschool-age development (57%)
- Positive discipline / behavior modification (57%)
- Health and safety (57%)
- Learning through play (55%)
- Nutrition (55%)
- Social / emotional development (53%)
- Building positive relationships with parents (52%)
- Curriculum development/lesson planning (50%)

The top training topic of interest for both administrators and teaching staff and fourth for FCCH owners is positive discipline or behavior modification. This finding held across program types and regions as the most frequently requested training topic.

Professional Development Barriers.
Understanding the barriers to receiving professional development opportunities can inform how and what professional development opportunities are offered. The top three barriers most frequently identified across administrators, teachers, and family child care providers are:
- lack of funds
- lack of time
- family demands

The pattern of responses for administrators reporting on behalf of the teaching staff at their program is similar to the pattern of staff self-reporting. This suggests that administrators have a good sense of the challenges and barriers facing teaching staff who work directly with children. Administrators most frequently identified lack of funds as a barrier faced by their teaching staff which can also reflect their own inability to provide financial assistance to staff for professional development activities. While funding was also a big concern for teachers and support staff, lack of time to pursue professional development was the most frequently selected staff response. Balancing the demands of

both work and family responsibilities is challenging for the early childhood workforce and exacerbated by low compensation rates. Fewer resources are available to pay for other expenses such as child care while practitioners are engaged in professional development and higher education opportunities usually offered in the evenings and on weekends. These findings suggest that greater availability of funds to pursue professional development opportunities may enable more practitioners to improve their competence in working with young children. Also, the availability of supports such as child care, transportation, and work release stipends may relieve some of the pressures practitioners face in balancing work and family demands.

Analyzing the results by geographic regions revealed similar results with the exception of the Southern region where language was more frequently identified as a barrier. This is consistent with other studies on the workforce in Miami-Dade County where a majority of the child care workforce is foreign born and more than 60% identified English as their second language with varying levels of proficiency (Clements, 2011).

Technology Access and Needs.
Most of the ECE workforce report being comfortable taking classes on-line (76% to 92% agreed or strongly agreed across respondent groups). Fifty-four to 76% of the workforce would like training to improve their computer skills. Staff (61%) and FCCH owners (66%) report a greater interest in trainings to improve their computer skills than administrators (54%). Administrators at schools are least likely to indicate an interest in improving their computer skills compared to administrators at other programs. Seventy-one percent of administrators agree (somewhat or strongly) with allowing release time for staff to attend technology trainings.

Access to computers with internet is relatively high across respondent groups ranging from 78% to 89%. Staff have the lowest degree of access relative to administrators and FCCH owners. Thirty-one to 39% of respondents indicated having a smart phone. Most administrators have access to a fax machine (83%) and copier (84%). Scanners are less likely to be accessible across respondent groups than copiers or fax machines. Staff has relatively

low rates of access to office machines including copiers, faxes, and scanners (ranging from 40% to 60%). There is variation across regions on the percentage of practitioners with access to office machines. Administrators in the Central, Northeast, and Southeast regions have the highest rates of access to such equipment. Staff in the Southern region is least likely to have access to office machines relative to staff in other regions.

Regarding barriers to using technology, the single largest and most consistently reported technology barrier across respondent groups, program types, and regions is lack of time (ranging from 16% to 24% across respondent groups). The next most prevalent barrier for staff is not having access to a computer with internet at home (10%).

Section 3: Qualitative Interview and

Focus Group Findings

As indicated, administrators and FCCH owners were interviewed and instructional staff participated in focus groups designed to capture in-depth qualitative perceptual data about their experiences, barriers, and needs related to their work in the ECE field. Participant's feedback mirrored findings from the surveys and provided some additional information for understanding the experiences of the ECE workforce in Florida. Below is a summary of the findings from the qualitative interview/focus group data.

Professional Development.
Interviewees were asked what professional development opportunities were available within their community as well as those opportunities that were lacking. The most common answer among the interviewees

regarding availability was opportunities at their respective local college, university or technical school. Second were Early Learning Coalitions and third were nonprofit organizations. The Department of Children and Families ranked fourth among respondents. When asked what was lacking in their community, respondents referred to training topics such as curriculum development and lesson planning along with business management and leadership. Respondents also noted that they would like more training on statewide standards as well as general professionalism. Current standards trainings include regional and local trainings provided by Early Learning Coalitions. Regional Train-the-Trainer sessions for the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards were rolled out to the early learning coalitions, partners and other trainers across Florida in the summer of 2010. These sessions were planned to develop a statewide cadre of trainers who will be responsible for training providers in implementing the standards in classrooms. Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards trainings are conducted locally as needed in the coalition geographic area.

Both focus groups members and interviewees were also asked how they found out about professional development opportunities. Both cited Early Learning Coalition communication and e-mails along with other online sources and fliers. Another often cited source was finding out from others through employer communications, word of mouth, colleague recommendations, or professional networking.

Professional Development Preferences.
Many respondents favored holding trainings either at their own program site or at a nearby program site. Others preferred a college or university environment while some desired online training. Regarding those who should be leading this training, respondents preferred individuals at local colleges or universities as well as Early Learning Coalition staff.

Both focus groups members and interviewees preferred college courses and in-service classes as the ideal types of training experiences. When asked about the learning experience, all respondents were emphatic that training needed to be hands-on and interactive. Additionally, they wanted the material to be practical and be able to learn in a collaborative

atmosphere allowing for networking and sharing. A variety of topics were suggested by respondents with some of the most popular being developmentally appropriate practices in early care and education, teaching through play, working with children with challenging behaviors, business management, and curriculum and lesson planning. Finally, when asked in what language the training should be offered, the two most common responses were English and Spanish.

Usefulness of Trainings Attended.
Interview respondents were asked about the most beneficial training experience they had within the last five years and what made that experience so beneficial. Just as respondents noted the importance of an ideal learning experience to be hands-on and interactive with practical information, these were also the qualities used to describe the majority of their previous experiences identified as the most beneficial. Interviewees were asked about their level of training in business management and how beneficial that training has been in operating their facility. Most all respondents had received some training in business management from a variety of sources including on the job training and the business management portion of the Director's Credential training. Almost all said the training received was useful.

Professional Development Barriers.
Both focus groups members and interviewees were asked about their biggest challenges to furthering their education, and in both cases lack of funding was cited as the biggest constraint. Additionally, time constraints were second-most common. Other answers were competing demands such as family obligations and limited class availability. When interviewees were asked what professional development they would seek if there were no barriers or constraints to consider, the majority stated they would take early care and education classes, pursue a degree in the field, and pursue a degree in business management or leadership. When focus group respondents were asked for the top three items that would most help them to obtain additional education and training, they cited more funding, more time, a better variety of training, and more support.

Job Satisfaction.
Many of the focus group members and interviewees stated that they chose to work at their current program because the type of program was appealing to them (i.e. family owned, Christian-based, etc.), because they had a passion for the field, because their own children could attend the facility, and/or because of the opportunities available for professional growth.

Both focus groups members and interviewees were asked what they liked most and least about being an early care and education provider or administrator. Overwhelmingly, the most common answer was making a positive impact on children and watching them grow. A close second response was impacting families and establishing relationships. Both interviewees and focus group respondents stated that dealing with challenging parents and the ramification of tight finances were two of the least desirable attributes of their work. Administrators also had a difficult time dealing with staffing issues while providers disliked working in sites with poor administration.

Employee Turnover and Retention.
Interviewees were asked about their biggest challenges in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified ECE staff. The majority stated that the biggest difficulty was finding individuals who already possessed the qualifications to work in the early care and education field. They also noted that hiring proved to be difficult with low salaries and minimal benefits. When asked what would make it easier to retain qualified staff, the majority of administrators noted higher wages and benefits would be key to retaining highly qualified employees.

Interviewees were questioned regarding the top three reasons employees decided to continue working at their respective facilities. The top three answers given were positive work environment, supportive administration, and flexible work hours. Interviewees were also questioned regarding the top three reasons their employees decided to leave their respective facilities. The top three answers were low wages and benefits as well as higher wages offered at another potential place of employment, moving out of the area, and changes in employees' personal situations.

Serving Special Populations.
Both interviewees and focus groups members were asked what type of additional training and services would assist them in better working with children with special needs. Responses for training included more in-depth training on various types of disabilities, how to work with children with disabilities, and how to relate to and communicate with their parents. Responses for services included more access to specialists, more classroom aides, and better equipment.

Both interviewees and focus groups members were asked what type of additional training and services would assist them in better working with children with limited English skills. Responses for training included basic foreign language acquisition training and strategies on how to work with dual language learners. Responses for services included more parent involvement, translators in the classroom, more classroom aides, bilingual teachers, and bilingual curriculum and classroom materials.

Study Considerations
This research was conducted in response to a competitive request for proposals (RFP) released by the Florida Office of Early Learning on behalf of the Florida State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. This study was commissioned and funded to better understand the ECE workforce and use statewide data to drive policy decisions. The State Advisory Council will use the findings of this report to generate policy recommendations for the Office of Early Learning.

Before such recommendations are generated, it will help to consider the findings of the study in the context of the study's limitations. First, it is necessary to bear in mind that there were specific requirements per the RFP within which this study was conducted, meaning adherence to certain contractual requirements and review processes. Also, as with most research, there were limitations on the funders and the research team in terms of the time and funding available to conduct this study which impacted the study methodology, sample size, type and amount of outreach activities possible, and amount of time available for data collection. Study limitations surrounding funding, time constraints, and contractual parameters are summarized below.

- **Data Collection Methods:** Survey data collection was predominately via on-line surveys because of the lower cost of web-based data collection. Telephone and paper surveys were only available upon request or if falling within a harder to reach sub-group. Physically visiting a site to collect survey data or mailing hard copy forms to all selected programs was not an option.

- **Sampling Methods:** Response rates for studies of this size and scope and with the ECE population tend to be similar to the rate obtained for this study (25%). With greater oversampling and a larger sample size, the sub-group samples would also have been larger strengthening the conclusions that could be drawn regarding those groups. However, if a larger survey sample would have been selected for this study, there would not have been sufficient funds to cover the added cost or time needed for communication, mailing, and outreach; especially for the more intensive outreach required per contract for a hard-to-reach group which made up about one-third of the selected sample. Anticipated non-response rates had to be balanced with data collection feasibility factors.

- **Sampling Frame:** The sampling frame for this study was very comprehensive and included all types of ECE programs and employees of those programs including non-teaching support staff. The ECE workforce is made up many different kinds of programs and workers and capturing information on the full workforce is ideal. However, the more broad focus on capturing all possible program and worker types may have also impacted response rates by spreading resources thinner and potentially creating a barrier to sites that may have perceived it overly burdensome to ensure that all their employees respond. In fact, there were very few non-teaching support staff who responded and very few practitioners from school-based programs that responded.

- **Data Collection Timeframes:** Data collection had to begin in the summer to meet contractual requirements but some programs were not open in the summer. Although the survey was then re-opened for a period of time in the fall, ECE programs housed at schools, which are not typically open during the summer, responded to the survey with a very low frequency. The start time of the survey may have played a role in response rates overall and particularly for school-based programs.

- **Areas Addressed:** Recognizing the important role of stakeholder input in the workforce study, questions covering a wide range of topics were proposed. Their input guided the development of the research questions meeting the requirements outlined in the RFP. This input framed the study in terms of comprehensiveness but it also resulted in 40 to 60 item surveys which likely impacted response rates. A balancing act ensued to maintain the breadth of the study while keeping the survey to a reasonable length. This dynamic challenged the study team in allowing sufficient time for the revision and review process yet not extending beyond contract deliverable due dates for survey administration.

- **Interagency Collaboration:** Due to the short timeframe of the study, a list of partner agencies was quickly generated based on the Children's Forum's collaborative relationships with many ECE agencies and organizations around the State. Those agencies were reached out to for assistance in outreach for the study. This list was not all-inclusive. With a more comprehensive list of agencies serving the ECE workforce, greater outreach may have been possible, thereby increasing response rates. Additionally, there was insufficient time to coordinate an interagency conference call or other general venue for fully informing agencies of all the nuances of the study. A brief letter and follow-up telephone call was instead made to each agency describing the study and requesting their support.

- **Analysis and Reporting:** Decisions regarding the analysis and reporting plan needed to be made and generally adhered to early on given limited time to conduct the study; specific contractual deliverable dates tied to financial penalties for each step of the research process; and a five-person review committee procedure for approval of most requested changes. These parameters helped keep the project on track and ensured adequate quality control and meeting the specific needs of the

State Advisory Council that commissioned the study. At the same time, this combination of factors (e.g. limited time, intense review process, and incremental due dates requiring formal request to change) resulted in barriers to the typically fluid decision making in research whereby best methods for data analysis and reporting occur simultaneously with running, re-conceptualizing, and re-running analyses based on prior literature, research questions, and theory as well as data findings. Although it was possible to make changes throughout the course of this study and all parties were committed to expediting the process as much as possible, realistically, there was not sufficient time for this kind of incremental and fluid process. For example, there was an initial requirement to analyze all data by 67 counties in Florida. A quick examination of the data in accordance with deliverable due dates resulted in a recommendation to instead examine six geographic boundaries. Later in the process it appeared that further collapsing of geographical boundaries might be more ideal for some findings. However, there was not sufficient time at that point to make such a mid-course adjustment.

Furthermore, there are many considerations relating to the representativeness of the survey sample to the population of ECE providers throughout Florida as well as factors impacting the precision of data and analysis. These issues are summarized below.

- Most of the data collected for this study were self-reported and the validity and completeness of the data cannot be quantified. As with all survey research, there is some measurement error and bias inherent in the data presented within this report, the extent to which is unknown. As an example, some survey items asked respondents to "select all that apply" from a menu of options and if the respondent does not select a given option, it is assumed that option did not apply to them or their program. This is a common practice in survey research and this assumption fits in most cases. However, it is also possible that the option was applicable but the respondent intentionally or unintentionally skipped the item or option or misunderstood the item or option so that not selecting a given option could also be a

reflection of missing or inaccurate data rather than a valid not-applicable response (e.g., a program really receives tuition payments from parents as a source of funding but the administrator, misunderstanding the survey question, did not select that option on the survey).

- Data were merged across data sources using the unique program numbers issued by the Florida DCF. Some data could not be linked due to lack of a valid and reliable unique program identifier. Furthermore, some variables could not be directly quantified based on available data and therefore had to be extrapolated using the most valid and complete data available.

- Programs were randomly selected to participate in the survey but practitioners at selected programs could choose whether or not to participate. Even though a representative group was sampled and the respondent group was similar to the population in many ways, it is likely that the sample differs in some ways from the population. For example, although QRIS status was not readily available for all programs in the State, an overall estimate of the QRIS program participation rate in Florida is about 10% relative to 33% for the survey respondent sample. QRIS participation in Florida is limited to counties falling within 11 coalition areas and is typically voluntary. It follows that administrators and FCCH owners participating in this study may place a higher value on program quality, staff professional development, and staff retention relative to the population. As another example, the survey was conducted primarily on-line increasing the likelihood of the respondent sample being more technologically savvy relative to the population. The survey sample cannot therefore be generalized to the population. The take home message is that the survey sample was similar in many ways to the population but the sample differs as well due to the voluntary nature of the study and therefore we cannot assume the findings from this study are always representative of the ECE workforce in Florida

- The responding sample was a slightly higher risk group in terms of poverty, bilingual, and rural status relative to the population

of providers because these providers were oversampled and more intensely targeted to ensure sufficient responses from this group.

- Random sampling occurred at the ECE program level not the practitioner level because there is no comprehensive database of ECE practitioners throughout the State. It is unknown whether and to what extent staff responding to the Teacher and Support Staff Survey are representative of all staff at ECE programs throughout Florida. However, we know the sample size is small relative to the estimated number of ECE practitioners in Florida. Also, direct communications were sent to administrators using available contact information and those administrators were relied upon to pass the study participation information along to their staff. We do not know the extent to which staff at programs had ample opportunity to participate or to what extent administrators encouraged participation.

- Survey sample sizes for sub-groups (e.g., program types and regions) were often small limiting the ability to generalize to sub-group populations. Sub-groups examined throughout the report included position type (administrators, FCCH providers, and teachers and support staff), program type (centers, schools, religious exempt, and FCCHs), and region (Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southern, and Suncoast). Where notable difference among these groups were found, those differences are highlighted in this report but caution is recommended for generalizing these sub-group findings to the sub-group populations for making statewide inferences and policy decisions for those sub-groups.

Recommendations for Future Study
Despite limitations of this study, it represents the most comprehensive data collection and reporting effort of the Florida ECE workforce ever conducted. The study obtained stakeholder information and perceptions from ECE practitioners in all regions and nearly all counties in the State. All program types were represented and all practitioners at randomly selected programs were invited to participate in the study. Random sampling helped ensure a fairly representative group of participating programs even with some differences in

relation the population which is to be expected in voluntary survey research. The rich findings from this study can be used to guide statewide decisions and policies impacting the ECE workforce. Given that policy recommendations based on this study are the role of the State Advisory Council, recommendations provided in this section pertain to future workforce studies.

Future workforce studies are recommended every three to five years so that updated data is continuously available to guide future policies and decisions affecting the ECE workforce. As mentioned, this study was conducted within fairly tight funding and time parameters which placed some limitations on the study design and methodology. Assuming that somewhat more time and funds could be available for future workforce studies and based on lessons learned from this study, the following is a list of suggestions for future workforce studies.

- **Data Collection Methods:** In addition to administering an on-line survey, mail hard copies to all selected facilities (approximately 10; half in English and half in Spanish) and FCCHs (one English, one Spanish) along with self addressed postage paid envelopes. Programs can make more copies of the surveys as needed but this would accommodate most program staff sizes and primary languages. In a survey study of ECE practitioners in Miami-Dade County (Clements, 2012), when both paper and on-line surveys were made available, approximately 1100 practitioners responded with about two-thirds submitting paper surveys. In the following year, using the same survey and population, when the survey was administered as web-based only, the sample size was about 300 practitioners. Note too that 1100 responses from one county alone is almost twice the respondent sample size obtained in this entire statewide study. Part of this was due to having a greater amount of time to conceptualize and conduct the study and offering the hard-copy survey option. The other key reason was greater motivation to respond because respondents in the Miami-Dade study were being surveyed about specific services they were receiving.

  Telephone and on-site survey data collection could be available by request only. It is rare

that there would be sufficient funds to collect data on-site from thousands of programs but perhaps these options could be available in rare cases where the program director gives assurance that the data can be obtained on site or by telephone but it is clear that otherwise the data will not be provided.

- **Sampling Frame:** Oversample to a larger degree selecting a larger random survey sample to better ensure sufficient sample size overall and within groups. Limit the respondents to those with the primary administrative role for the program site and those providing direct care to children (e.g., lead teachers, assistant teachers, FCCH providers). In terms of policy decisions, it is likely that most will center on administration and teaching staff or direct care providers. Conduct a separate study for school-based programs as the structure, administration, and rules governing service provision likely differ for school-based as compared to non-school based providers. The limited response from school-based providers in this study surely had to do with the timing of the initial data collection phase which occurred when schools were closed. However, administrators at school-based programs may have also felt that this study was not applicable to them because the communications and surveys had to be more geared to the bulk of the providers which were private child care facilities. Communications and surveys more tailored specifically to preschool programs at schools and survey administration beginning in the fall or spring would likely allow for a better understanding of the characteristics and experiences of the school-based workforce.

- **Data Collection Timeframes and Procedure:** Begin survey administration in the fall or spring of the academic year rather than during the summer; even if it means holding off on data collection for a period of time. Hold two 2-month data collection cycles (with the last two weeks for reminder communications) using random replacement for the second data collection cycle. Non-responders from the first data collection cycle could be contacted and given an extension for submitting their survey. However, if they didn't reply the first time they likely won't the second time around so a replacement random

sample similar in size and demographics to the non-responders could be selected for the second data collection cycle to improve response rates.

Begin making telephone calls within two weeks of the survey start date to encourage involvement using a non-systematic method. In other words, don't target a specific group for outreach because the ECE workforce as a whole is at high risk for not responding. Take a targeted approach after learning from the first survey cycle which kinds of respondents are less likely to respond. In this study there was actually an over-representation from the harder to reach group which had a counter effect of reducing the representativeness of the study. Those programs may have otherwise responded proportionately to the population yielding a more representative sample without using valuable time and resources to identify and target a specific group. More of that time could then be reallocated to general outreach to increase the overall sample size.

- **Areas Addressed:** Focus the study specifically on understanding the characteristics of the workforce streamlining the survey to about two to three pages front and back including instructions. Be more verbose in explaining what is being requested for each item which will help ensure valid responses. Examining professional development preferences or other such information is also important but should be a separate study to get rich data on that information as well. Trying to capture such a broad range of questions and topic areas in one survey in such a short timeframe with limited funds likely yielded less depth and validity than separate focused studies.

- **Interagency Collaboration:** Obtain a broader list of organizations and agencies around the State that can assist with data collection and give them information regarding the sample methods in layman's terms that they can share with their constituents. Information could be provided via a Go-To-Meeting conference call with agencies to inform them about the study and garner their buy-in for supporting data collection and outreach efforts. In the current study, agencies were supportive and eager to assist but there were some questions about why some

programs were selected rather than others. Even though agencies were informed that random sampling was used, more detailed information or information provided in a different more user-friendly venue may have helped.

- **Analysis and Reporting:** After the second and final cycle of data collection, make decisions about how to report the data based on continual analysis of the data as needed. In terms of contractual parameters, this could be best facilitated if review and approval of analysis and reporting were based on draft and final reports rather than initial analyses. It will be clear what analyses were conducted in the draft report but by that point, if the typical fluidity of analysis and reporting has occurred, several shifts in how the data were analyzed and reported may have occurred. This does not preclude regular conversation and collaboration between researchers and the funders as this process unfolds which is highly recommended and critical to the process. However, if the analysis plan and analyses are not concrete deliverables requiring formal review and amendment to change, the final product will be based on the best thinking of the research team and the process will be expedited leaving more time for changes after the first draft if needed. With good communication and collaboration between the research team and funders and sufficient intermediary time for the review process, few changes will be needed in the analyses themselves after the first report draft.

Finally, if the same funds and time were available to conduct a future workforce study, the recommendations would obviously differ. In this case:

- Select a relatively small random sample but one still large enough to be statistically valid, reliable, and representative (e.g., n = 600 to 800). With this smaller sample size, be more intense about getting an accurate response from that group and do random replacement until the target is met or as close as reasonably possible within timeframe. With this method, there would be little room for attrition.

- Be realistic about how much the data could be broken out assuming at the start of the study that no more than two to three global groupings will be possible (e.g., center-based and FCCH; north, south, and central regions).

- Make the survey available on-line and via paper along with business reply envelopes. Provide surveys in both English and Spanish to reach the most used languages in Florida. Conduct a telephone follow-up with every program sampled to collect the data or to verify the data for accuracy if already submitted.

- Limit the sampling frame to child care providers and FCCHs.

- Finally, shorten the survey to approximately two pages front and back and provide more explanation throughout the survey as described above.

Understanding that with such limited funds and time it is likely that the sample size is going to be small and setting reasonable expectations for what can be accomplished with a smaller sample size will allow for a better allocation and use of limited time and resources. Hopefully this method would yield a more representative sample and more accurate data.

If the ideal of a large sample size and comprehensive reach to all providers and capturing a wide array of topics is not feasible, it will be better to trade-off the larger sample size and breadth of focus in order to get more accurate and representative information. However, as a final note, random sampling is the most critical design element to retain for future study as it will give all programs and practitioners equal chance of being selected and offer the greatest likelihood of a representative respondent sample.