

**Variations in Wages & Benefits Paid to New Jersey's Center-Based Child Care Staff
Based on Classroom Role, Ages Served, and Center Characteristics**

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Executive Summary

This report examines the wages and benefits (vacation/holidays, sick leave, full- or partially paid health care, access to an employer sponsored pension) paid to full-time teacher and assistants working in New Jersey's licensed child care centers. Data for the report are drawn from two sources. The first source is survey of teachers and assistants working in licensed child care centers throughout the state that was conducted as part of the 2008 Preschool Expansion Assessment Research Study (PEARS; Friedman et al., 2009). The second set of data was supplied by the New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NJACCRRRA) and focused on the demographics of these child care centers, including receipt of three types of funding, profit status, general income level of the families served, type of community, and location within the state.

Analysis of the PEARS survey data demonstrates that as is the case throughout the United States, hourly rates of pay dominate the child care field in New Jersey. The average hourly rate for all child care center teachers and assistants in the state is \$10.31. Assistant teachers earn an average wage between \$9.09 and 9.17 per hour. Infant/toddler teachers make just over \$10 per hour. The average rate of pay for preschool teachers is about \$1.20 per hour higher.

After converting the sample's hourly rate and number of hours/months worked into an annual rate of pay, preschool teachers earn the highest average annual salary of \$24,927. Infant/toddler teachers earn an average of \$3,398 less per year. Assistants in either age group have average yearly salaries in the low \$19,000 range. Furthermore, 82 percent of full-time infant/toddler teachers, 95.3 percent of their assistants, and 88 percent of preschool assistants earn \$25,000 per year or less. Conversely, the salaries of just 64.5 percent of teachers in preschool classrooms met this threshold. An additional 24.2 percent earn between \$25,001 and \$35,000 per year.

In terms of benefits, between 85 and 90 percent of center-based child care teachers and assistants reporting receiving paid vacation and/or holidays. The average number of days received is between 13 and 14. In addition, between 65 and 71 percent of teachers and assistants reports receiving paid sick days. The average number of days received is between 6 and 7. However, only about one-third of child care staff receive full- or partially paid healthcare. Finally, just 10 – 17 percent of teachers and assistants participate in an employer-sponsored pension.

Examining the association between the center demographics supplied by NJACCRRRA and staff pay rates and access to four employment benefits suggests some interesting implications for center-based child care teachers and assistants who might wish to maximize their compensation. For example, infant/toddler teachers may make higher hourly rates, receive greater amounts of paid vacation/holidays, and have a higher chance of receiving access to full- or partially paid health care if they work in a center that does not receive CBC, ECPA, or ELLI funding. However, their annual salary, number of sick days, and chance of participating in an employer-sponsored pension may increase if they work in a center that does receive such funding.

Preschool teachers appear to have better compensation if they work in a non-profit center that receives CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding. Generally serving higher income families also is advantageous in terms of the overall compensation. Hourly pay rates may be better in the suburbs, but urban districts may present the opportunity to boost yearly income. As is the case with infant/toddler teachers, the northern region of the state also may be better for all compensation areas except participation in an employer-sponsored pension.

For infant/toddler assistants, a center's receipt of CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding appears to be associated with better compensation in every category except hourly wage. A center being non-profit and located in an urban district also would seem to be advantageous. When higher income families are enrolled, assistants may have higher hourly rates of pay plus increased access to health care and a pension. However, lower-income centers may offer better annual salaries and greater numbers of vacation and sick days.

Finally, preschool assistants may make higher rates of pay when in a non-profit center that does not receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding, but have access to better benefits if a center receives such funding and is non-profit. Serving higher-income families also may increase the chance of a better pay rate and access to health and pension plans. Not surprisingly, a center's location in the suburbs may also increase yearly salary and the opportunity to receive these two specific benefits.

While this data is useful for providing more up-to-date information on child care wages in New Jersey, it also brings about some additional questions. For example, are the wages and benefits received by New Jersey's licensed child care workforce impacting centers' ability to consistently recruit and retain employees? Are there any variations in recruitment and retention issues based on role (teacher versus assistant) and ages served? Given the difference in rates of pay between infant/toddler and preschool teachers, recruiting and retaining staff to work in classrooms serving the state's youngest children may be a specific area of concern.

At the same time—and given the state's push to provide high quality PreK—of particular interest is the effect of this specific program on the wages paid to preschool teachers working in licensed child care centers. Are preschool teacher wages higher than those for infant/toddler teachers due to competition from PreK providers? Or, do these higher wages represent a growing awareness of the importance of preschool education and parents seeking out child care programs that are perceived to be of higher quality?

Also unknown is the extent to which wages and benefits for all four groups contribute to—or detract from—the quality of children's experiences while enrolled in these centers. Given the federal focus on improving the quality of all early learning settings, as well as the potential for New Jersey to expand access to publicly funded preschool, all of these topics should be of interest to researchers and early care and education stakeholders.

Introduction

Researchers have been drawing attention to child care wages—or the lack thereof—for at least two decades (Bellm, 1994; CQO Study Team, 1995; Modigliani, 1986; Whitebook, 1999; 2001; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990, 1998). The low average rate of pay results from traditional perceptions about the value of “women’s work” and the minimal level of education needed to work in child care centers. Also contributing to low child care center wages are the reliance on parent fees and often-inadequate subsidy levels as the main source of revenue (Ackerman, 2006).

No matter what the cause, center-based child care compensation levels affect more than the take-home paychecks of staff. It seems unlikely that teachers with better-than-required qualifications can consistently be recruited and retained to work in child care settings if they can earn a higher salary elsewhere. In fact, teacher turnover has been another long-standing problem in the child care field (Manlove & Guzella, 1997; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). This interrelated problem most likely plays a role in research suggesting that teacher wages are an important predictor of child care classroom quality (Mocan, Burchinal, Morris, & Helburn, 1995; Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, & Abbott-Shim, 2000; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, & Cryer, 1997; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). Similar findings have been reported for toddler child care classrooms in Portugal (Pessanha, Aguiar, & Bairrão, 2007) and preschool classrooms in Canada (Goelman, Forer, Kershaw, Doherty, Lero, & LaGrange, 2006). Another study of more than 100 classrooms serving preschoolers in four Midwestern states suggests that wages may serve as a mediator between teacher education level and child care classroom quality (Torquati, Raikes, & Huddleston-Casas, 2007). Child care quality also may be negatively affected if wages are too low for teachers to afford the cost of formal college coursework or ongoing professional development as a means for enhancing their skills and knowledge base.

These issues are critical given the larger policy focus on improving the quality of early care and education settings through such potential vehicles as the recently proposed federal Early Learning Challenge Fund (H.R. 3221). It therefore is useful for center-based child care stakeholders and decision makers to keep tabs on the compensation provided to classroom staff. This study reports on a large-scale study of the wages and benefits paid to teachers and assistants working in New Jersey’s center-based child care classrooms. To help place the results into a broader context, the report begins with other recent state studies on child care wages. This is followed with a description of the study’s methodology and results. The report concludes with a discussion and recommendations for future research.

Child Care Teachers Across the U.S.: What do they Earn?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics at the US Department of Labor (2010) tracks the average hourly rate of pay for child care workers. This category includes individuals working in private homes, family day care providers, and child care centers, including private programs and publicly funded initiatives such as Head Start. In addition, the data does not distinguish between teachers and assistants. The most recent data available is from May 2009.

As can be seen in Table 1, no state has an average hourly rate of pay that exceeds \$12.00. New Jersey's average hourly rate is \$10.92, meaning it is ranked 8th out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The lowest average rate of pay for child care workers is in Arkansas, which has a mean hourly pay rate of \$8.05. The highest rate is in the District of Columbia, with the average rate being \$11.82.

Table 1. *Average child care worker wages across the United States*

Hourly Rate	States
\$8.00 – 9.00	Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia
\$9.01 – \$10.00	Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wyoming
\$10.01 – \$11.00	Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington
\$11.01 – \$12.00	Alaska, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin

Note: Table derived from Occupational Employment Statistics available at <http://data.bls.gov:8080/oes/search.do;jsessionid=6230f2d6d5e237575c5b>

While all the pay rates are low as compared to what might be earned in other professions, the hourly rates also seem to reflect larger regional differences. The states in the lower two tiers of pay rates tend to be in the south or less densely populated/more rural states. Conversely, the states in the two upper pay rate bands tend to be in the northeast, mid-Atlantic region, or along the West Coast.

Several state-based studies of child care wages have been conducted in the past few years, as well. The studies can provide a bit more detail due to breaking down child care wages based on position and/or teacher's formal credential. For example, a 2007 study conducted in one region of Massachusetts determined that the average assistant salary was \$9.90. Lead teachers earned on average \$12.51. However, the sample for this study included teachers in child care centers and Head Start settings (Child Care Circuit, 2007). A 2008 study conducted of the early childhood workforce in Illinois found that center-based, lead teachers who do not have a BA earned an average hourly rate of \$10.88 (Fowler, Bloom, Talan, Beneke, & Kelton, 2008). Another study in Illinois (Garnier, 2008) found a mean salary of \$10.40 per hour for teachers and \$8.29 per hour for assistants. In 2009, the average wage per hour for a lead teacher in a Missouri child care center was \$8.73. For assistants, the average hourly rate decreased by over \$1.00 to \$7.62 (Children's Division, Early Childhood Prevention Services Section, 2009).

The most recent wage and benefit survey for New Jersey's child care workforce took place in 2000-2001 (NJACCRRRA, 2001). At that time, the *median* wage (meaning the wage that

represents the value that is halfway between the range of all responses) for a non-certified group teacher was \$8.81. The median wage for assistants was \$7.50. Given that this study took place almost 10 years ago, state child care stakeholders are in need of updated information. Of particular interest is whether the average wage varies based on center demographics. The purpose of this report is to provide that data. The methodology for the study is described next.

Study Methodology

Data Sources

The information provided in this report comes from two sources. The first source is the wage and benefits data that was collected by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) as part of the 2008 Preschool Expansion Assessment Research Study (PEARS). The PEARS study examined the capacity of New Jersey's public schools, child care centers, and Head Start settings to participate in an expansion of the state's publicly funded preschool education program (Friedman et al., 2009). The data used in the present report was collected in the first phase of PEARS and through self-administered surveys or direct interviews with teachers and assistants. No matter which method was used, several questions focused on self-reported hours per week and months per year of paid work, as well as hourly or yearly wage. Those who participated in the self-administered surveys also were asked questions about the type of benefits they receive, including health insurance and paid vacation.

The second source of data used in this report comes from NJACCRRRA. Representatives from each of the state's resource and referral agency provided demographic data about the child care centers that participated in PEARS. This included whether centers receive Center-Based Care (CBC) subsidies, Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA), or Early Launch to Literacy Initiative (ELLI) funds, their profit status, the income group (e.g. poverty/working poor vs. middle-class or higher) of most families enrolled in a center, and whether the community could be considered urban, suburban, or rural. This information was then used to determine if there were any differences in wages or benefits received by the study participants based on the demographics of their centers.

Sample

To better understand the full-time wages and benefits received by New Jersey's center-based child care teachers and assistants, this report focuses on the data collected solely from those individuals who participated in the PEARS study and reported working at least 35 hours per week and 9 months per year in a child care center (as opposed to being part of a public school or Head Start program). The sample was restricted to this group so that any wage and benefit comparisons would be among similar staff who work what could be considered a full-time teaching schedule.

As can be seen in Table 2, the sample providing data for this report therefore includes 746 teachers and 374 assistants from child care centers located throughout the state. Almost 36

percent of the teacher sample, and 45.2 percent of the assistant sample, work in classrooms serving infants and toddlers. The remaining individuals work in preschool classrooms.

Table 2. *Study sample*

HOURS WORKED/ WAGE QUESTIONS	Teachers (n =746) (%)	Assistant Teachers (n = 374) (%)
Ages Served		
Infants and/or Toddlers	35.8	45.2
Preschoolers	64.2	54.8
BENEFITS QUESTIONS	Teachers (n = 277) (%)	Assistant Teachers (n =181) (%)
Infants and/or Toddlers	45.1	60.2
Preschoolers	54.9	39.8

Because only the self-administered surveys asked teachers and assistants about the benefits received, the sample for these questions is 277 teachers and 181 assistants. These individuals also are included in the larger sample answering the hours/months worked and wage questions. The percent of individuals in either job category who worked in classrooms serving infants/toddlers or preschoolers also is displayed in Table 2.

Presented here is descriptive data in response to each of the hours worked, wages, and benefit questions. Also highlighted are any variations in these responses based on the center demographics supplied by NJACCRRRA.

Results

Months per year of paid employment

Teachers and assistants were asked to report how many months per year they are paid to work. As described above, our sample for this report is restricted to teachers and assistants who work at least 9 months per year. The average number of months for individuals in either job title or age setting is 11.9 months. Ninety-three percent of the sample works 12 months per year.

The average number of months worked differs slightly between the two ages-served groups (see Table 3). Over 95 percent of the infant/toddler teachers and assistants work year-round. Between 90 and 91 percent of preschool teachers and assistants work 12 months per year. Another 7.5 to 8.8 percent of preschool teachers and assistants, respectively, work 10 months per year.

Table 3. *Number of months per year employed*

	Teachers (%)		Assistants (%)	
	I/T (n=267)	Preschool (n=479)	I/T (n=169)	Preschool (n=205)
9 months	0.3	0.2	0.6	1.0
10 months	2.6	7.5	0.6	8.8
11 months	1.5	1.0	1.2	0.5
12 months	95.5	91.2	97.6	89.8

Because the sample worked at least 35 hours per week and the majority worked 12 months per year, there were only slight variations between the four groups in the average number of hours worked per year (see Table 4). Infant toddler teachers and assistants worked 2,032 hours per year, which also was the highest amount among the four groups. Preschool teachers worked an average of 10 fewer hours per year than staff serving infants and toddlers. Preschool assistants worked the least number of hours, but just 32-33 fewer than infant/toddler staff and 22 fewer than preschool teachers.

Table 4. *Average number of hours worked*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=267)	Preschool (n=479)	I/T (n=169)	Preschool (n=205)
Per year	2032	2021	2031	1999
Per week	39.1	38.9	39.1	38.4

There was very little variation between the four groups in their average number of hours worked per week, as well. In short, preschool teachers and assistants report working an average of 38-39 hours per week. Those in infant/toddler classrooms report an average of 39.1 hours per week.

Hourly vs. annual wages

The survey and interview also asked teachers and assistants to report whether they earn an hourly wage or annual salary. As can be seen in Table 5, the majority of child care teaching staff is paid on an hourly basis. This finding is aligned with both recent and more historical child care wage studies, all of which consistently report use of an hourly wage.

Table 5. *Type of wage earned by teachers and assistants*

	Teachers (%)		Assistants (%)	
	I/T (n=267)	Preschool (n=479)	I/T (n=169)	Preschool (n=205)
Hourly wage (n=929)	86.9 (n=232)	73.7 (n=353)	94.1 (n=159)	90.2 (n=185)
Annual salary (n=191)	13.1 (n=35)	26.3 (n=126)	5.9 (n=10)	9.8 (n=20)

The percentage of staff paid an annual salary versus an hourly wage varies based on position and ages of children served. Infant/toddler assistants are least likely to earn an annual salary, with just 5.9 percent reporting this type of pay. Slightly greater percentages (9.8 percent) of preschool assistants have their wage determined on a yearly basis. Among the teachers, just 13.1 percent of those in infant/toddler rooms receive annual wages. For preschool teachers, the percentage earning an annual salary jumps to 26.3.

Hourly Rates of Pay

In addition to the number of months per year employed, as well as whether an hourly or annual salary was earned, the survey and interview asked teachers and assistants to report on how much they are paid.

A total of 585 out of 746 teachers and 344 out 374 assistants reported earning an hourly wage. The average compensation across both groups is \$10.31. This is in line with the most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data reported above.

However, hourly wages differ between teachers and assistants, as well as the age group served (see Table 6). The highest average hourly rate—\$11.24—is paid to preschool teachers. On average, infant/toddler teachers report earnings of \$10.05 per hour. Among the assistants, the hourly rate was just over \$9.00 for both age groups.

Table 6. *Range of reported hourly rates of pay*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=232)	Preschool (n=353)	I/T (n=159)	Preschool (n=185)
Average	\$10.05	\$11.24	\$9.09	\$9.17
Lowest	\$7.15	\$7.00	\$7.15	\$6.50
Highest	\$22.50	\$31.00	\$13.50	\$23.00

At the time of the study, hourly wages for teachers in infant/toddler rooms ranged from \$7.15 - \$22.50. Preschool teachers who are paid on an hourly basis earned between \$7.00 and \$31.00 per hour. Infant/toddler assistants earned between \$7.15 and \$13.50 per hour. The hourly rate of pay for preschool assistants ranged from \$6.50 and \$23.00. It should be noted that while the federal minimum wage currently is \$7.25 per hour, data collection for the study took place in 2008, when the minimum wage was between \$5.85 and \$6.55 per hour.

Also examined was whether the average hourly pay rates for staff receiving this type of wage vary based on the center demographic data provided by NJACCRRRA (see Table 7). The first variable examined was whether a center received CBC, ELLI, and/or ECPA funding. Because just 21 percent of centers in the present study were reported to receive such funding, all three types were collapsed into one single “Receive funding” variable. The reported earnings of infant/toddler teachers was an average of \$.45 more per hour if their center did not receive such funding. However, if preschool teachers’ centers receive such funding, they earned an average of \$1.00 more per hour in comparison to those working in centers that do not. The average wages for assistants in both groups were \$.17 – \$.26 less if their centers received state or federal funding.

Table 7. Average hourly rates of pay based on reported center demographics

CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=226)	Preschool (n=344)	I/T (n=158)	Preschool (n=181)
Receive funding (20.8%; n=189)	\$9.80 (n=32)	\$12.14 (n=66)	\$8.99 (n=46)	\$9.29 (n=45)
No funding (79.2%; n=720)	\$10.25 (n=194)	\$11.15 (n=278)	\$9.25 (n=112)	\$9.46 (n=136)
Profit status	I/T (n=226)	Preschool (n=342)	I/T (n=159)	Preschool (n=181)
Non-profit (27.4%; n=249)	\$11.47 (n=50)	\$12.33 (n=92)	\$9.19 (n=49)	\$9.74 (n=58)
For-profit (72.6%; n=659)	\$9.82 (n=176)	\$10.98 (n=250)	\$9.18 (n=110)	\$9.27 (n=123)
Income level of families served	I/T (n=226)	Preschool (n=344)	I/T (n=159)	Preschool (n=182)
At/below poverty-level/wking poor (42.5%; n=387)	\$9.21 (n=88)	\$11.00 (n=155)	\$8.74 (n=63)	\$9.00 (n=81)
Middle class and/or higher (57.5%; n=524)	\$10.80 (n=138)	\$11.62 (n=189)	\$9.47 (n=96)	\$9.76 (n=101)
City/Town type	I/T (n=226)	Preschool (n=342)	I/T (n=159)	Preschool (n=181)
Suburban/Rural (81.8%; n=743)	\$9.92 (n=169)	\$11.38 (n=279)	\$9.16 (n=134)	\$9.54 (n=161)
Urban (18.2%; n=165)	\$10.96 (n=57)	\$11.18 (n=63)	\$9.30 (n=25)	\$8.47 n=(20)

Location in state	I/T (n=232)	Preschool (n=353)	I/T (n=159)	Preschool (n=185)
North (33.7%; n=313)	\$10.99 (n=76)	\$12.19 (n=125)	\$9.55 (n=43)	\$9.62 (n=69)
Central (44.6%; n=414)	\$10.00 (n=113)	\$11.10 (n=128)	\$9.11 (n=94)	\$9.33 (n=79)
South (21.7%; n=202)	\$9.14 (n=43)	\$10.46 (n=100)	\$8.77 (n=22)	\$9.16 (n=37)

Also analyzed was whether a center's profit status is associated with any differences in hourly rates of pay. This may be the case for the teachers. The average hourly rate for infant/toddler teachers in non-profit centers was \$1.65 higher in comparison to the rate in for-profit centers. Non-profit-based preschool teachers had an average hourly rate that was \$1.35 greater than what is earned by their for-profit colleagues, as well. At the same time, non-profit status resulted in a \$.47 hourly rate difference for preschool assistants, but the hourly wages paid to infant/toddler assistants in both either category is virtually identical.

The income level of the families served in a center appears to be positively associated with reported hourly rates of pay. Hourly wages for both teachers and assistants in centers serving middle class or higher children were consistently higher than those serving children from families that are at or below the poverty line or considered to be working poor. These differences ranged from \$.62 to \$1.59 per hour.

Whether a center was located in a suburban/rural or urban community does not appear to be consistently associated with differences in average hourly pay rates. Infant/toddler teachers in urban settings had an average hourly wage that was \$1 higher, but preschool teachers earned just \$.20 more per hour when their center was located in a suburban or rural setting. For the assistants, city/town type did not make much of a difference in the hourly wage of those working in infant/toddler classrooms. However, preschool assistants working in suburban/rural communities earned \$1.07 more on average than the urban counterparts.

When examining centers' locations within one of three state regions, average hourly wages are highest in the Northern region of the state. Compared to those individuals working in centers in the southern part of the state, northern-based teachers earned between \$1.73 and 1.85 more and assistants had an advantage of \$.46 and \$.78 per hour.

Yearly Earnings

Hourly rates of pay were converted into yearly salaries based on the number of reported hours per week and months per year. This data was combined with the annual salaries reported by the 191 non-hourly individuals to determine the average yearly earnings of each group. The highest average annual salary of \$24,927 is paid to preschool teachers. Infant/toddler teachers report earning an average salary of \$21,529. Preschool assistants earn on average \$19,511 per year. Infant/toddler assistants earn slightly less, with a reported annual salary of \$19,174 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average annual salaries by role and ages served

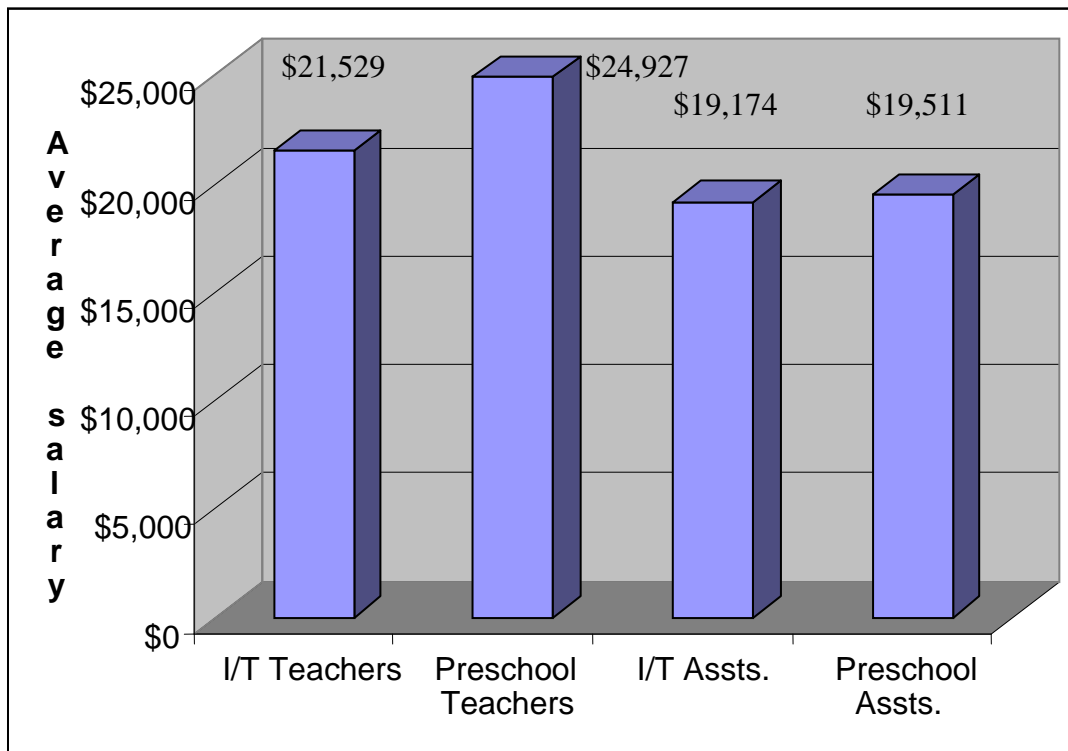


Figure 2. Distribution of teachers' and assistants' average yearly salaries

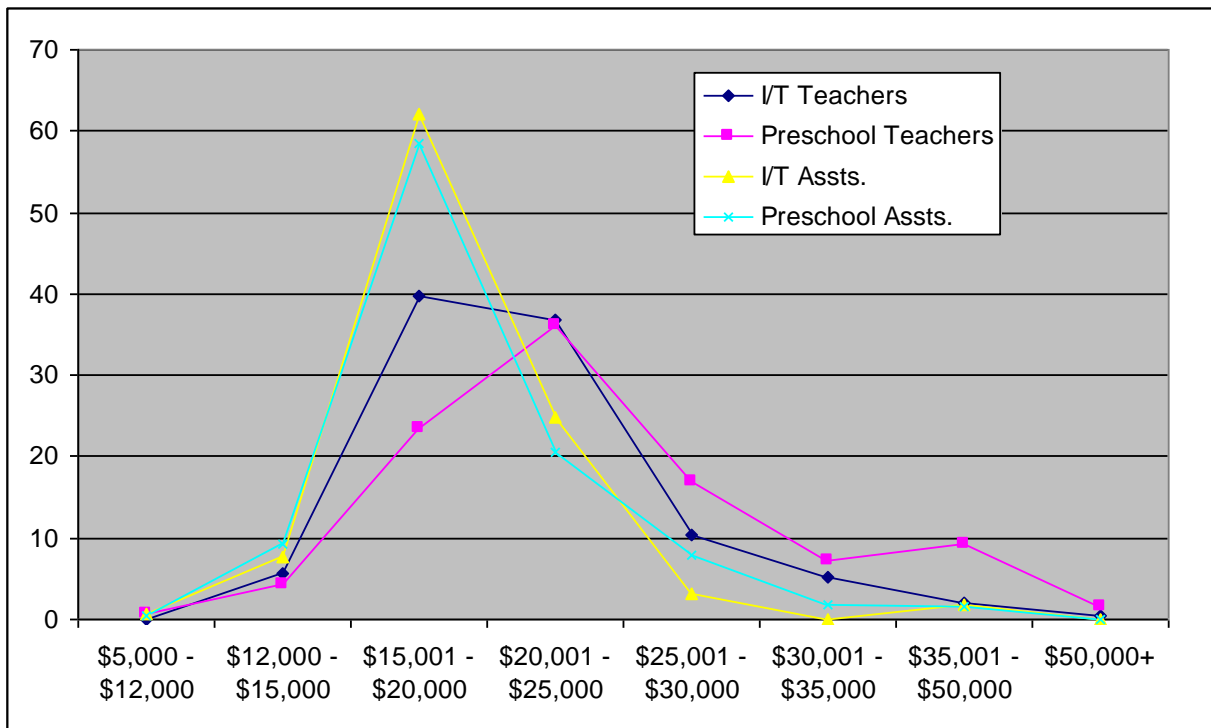


Figure 2 (page 9) displays the distribution of salaries across all four groups. For example, less than 10 percent of individuals in both roles and ages-served groups earn between \$12,000 and \$15,000 per year. The percentages jump considerably when looking at the next salary band of \$15,001 - \$20,000. Forty percent of infant/toddler teachers earn a yearly salary that falls into this range, as do about 60 percent of all assistants. In fact, the percent of assistants in either group and within all of the salary ranges is quite similar.

Equal percentages of infant/toddler and preschool teachers earn salaries in the \$20,001 - \$25,000 range. However, when comparing these two groups, slightly greater percentages of preschool teachers earn salaries that are greater than \$25,000. Preschool teachers also are the least likely group to earn a salary that is at or below \$25,000 per year. Only 64.5 percent of teachers in this group earn up to \$25,000 per year, in contrast to 82 percent of infant/toddler teachers, 87.8 percent of preschool assistants, and 95.3 percent of infant/toddler assistants.

Also examined was whether average yearly salaries reported by the study's participants are associated with variations in the center demographic data provided by NJACCRRRA (see Table 8). The first variable examined was whether a center received any CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (but collapsed into one variable). The average yearly salaries for teachers in infant/toddler and preschool programs receiving any state or federal funding is between \$1,163 and \$1,647 higher, respectively, than in centers not receiving such funding.

For infant/toddler assistants, the average salary differential based on center funding status is \$906, with those working in centers that receive such funding having a higher average salary. In contrast, average salaries for assistants in preschool programs were \$623 less if centers received CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding.

Table 8. *Average yearly salaries based on center demographics*

	Teachers (M)		Assistants (M)	
	I/T (n=260)	Preschool (n=468)	I/T (n=168)	Preschool (n=201)
CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding				
Receive funding (12.2%; n=118)	\$22,489.40 (n=42)	\$26,324.93 (n=102)	\$19,797.25 (n=53)	\$19,097.06 (n=51)
No funding (87.8%; n=849)	\$21,326.36 (n=218)	\$24,650.06 (n=366)	\$18,890.62 (n=115)	\$19,720.45 (n=150)
Profit status				
Non-profit (30.8%; n=338)	\$24,911.51 (n=69)	\$26,861.89 (n=147)	\$19,904.34 (n=56)	\$19,779.85 (n=66)
For-profit (69.2%; n=760)	\$20,384.41 (n=192)	\$24,239.90 (n=320)	\$18,812.20 (n=113)	\$19,450.05 (n=135)
Income level of families served				
At/below poverty-level/wking poor	\$19,920.57	\$24,259.99	\$19,208.94	\$18,660.25

(43.3%; n=477)	(n=99)	(n=214)	(n=73)	(n=91)
Middle class and/or higher (56.7%; n=625)	\$22,596.08 (n=162)	\$25,677.45 (n=256)	\$19,147.59 (n=96)	\$20,305.80 (n=111)
City/Town type	I/T (n=261)	Preschool (n=468)	I/T (n=169)	Preschool (n=201)
Suburban/Rural (80.7%; n=887)	\$21,295.44 (n=192)	\$24,894.12 (n=380)	\$19,161.56 (n=141)	\$19,667.88 (n=174)
Urban (19.3%; n=212)	\$22,376.47 (n=69)	\$25,723.87 (n=88)	\$19,237.22 (n=28)	\$18,852.44 (n=27)
Location in state	I/T (n=267)	Preschool (n=479)	I/T (n=169)	Preschool (n=205)
North (36.9%; n=413)	\$22,953.62 (n=92)	\$27,454.74 (n=190)	\$19,316.64 (n=46)	\$20,207.90 n= (85)
Central (42.1%; n=472)	\$21,335.28 (n=130)	\$23,883.63 (n=161)	\$19,400.10 (n=100)	\$19,000.23 (n=81)
South (21.0%; n=235)	\$19,179.33 (n=45)	\$22,488.40 (n=128)	\$17,906.35 (n=23)	\$19,055.51 (n=39)

A center's profit status also was associated with differences in yearly salaries. Specifically, the average salaries in non-profit centers are higher for both teachers and assistants working with both age groups. The difference in average salaries ranged from \$329.80 for preschool assistants to \$4,527 for infant/toddler teachers.

The average annual salaries for infant/toddler and preschool teachers in centers serving middle class parents versus those enrolling working poor or parents at or below the poverty level were \$1,417 and \$2,676 higher, respectively. Preschool assistants in middle class or higher centers also had an average salary advantage of \$1,645. However, the salaries for infant/toddler assistants did not reflect this trend, with the amount paid to staff in the lower socioeconomic group being \$61 higher.

The average annual salaries for teachers also varied based on whether a center was located in a suburban/rural or urban community. Their yearly earnings were between \$830 and \$1,081 higher if their centers were located in an urban setting. Urban infant/toddler assistants also earned a higher average salary, but only by \$76. Conversely, suburban/rural centers paid average preschool assistant salaries that were \$815 higher than those of the urban preschool assistant.

When examining average yearly salaries based on a center being located in the north, central, or south part of New Jersey, the lowest teacher salaries were in the south. Infant/toddler assistants working in a southern center earned almost \$1,500 less per year than those located in the north or central New Jersey. The average salaries for preschool assistants in the central and southern regions of the state were nearly identical. However, northern salaries for this role and ages-served group were about \$1,200 higher.

Benefits

Teachers and assistants who participated in the initial round of data collection (n=458) were asked to report whether they receive benefits in four specific categories: 1) paid vacation and holidays, 2) paid sick leave, 3) full or partially paid health care, and 4) an employer-sponsored pension. If participants answered “yes” to the vacation/holiday or sick leave question, they also were asked to report the number of days in either category that they were eligible to receive.

Paid vacation/holidays. Table 9 displays the results of the paid vacation/holidays question. Between 85 and 90 percent of teachers and assistants in either ages-served group reported that they receive paid vacation and/or holidays. Among these groups, the average number of days of paid vacation/holidays teachers and assistants report receiving is similar. Teachers in either age group receive an average of 14 paid vacation days or holidays and assistants receive an average of 13 days.

Table 9. *Paid vacation/holidays received*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=125)	Preschool (n=152)	I/T (n=109)	Preschool (n=72)
Receive Paid Vacation/Holidays (%)	84.8 (n=106)	90.1 (n=137)	89.9 (n=98)	81.9 (n=59)
Range of number of days	3 – 38	1 – 45	3 – 37	3 – 35
Average number of days received	14.0	13.9	12.9	13.4
Average number of holidays/paid vacation days received in centers that...				
Receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (n=101)	13.1 (n=23)	16.7 (n=32)	13.1 (n=38)	20.4 (n=8)
Do not receive funding (n=211)	13.9 (n=62)	12.5 (n=76)	12.8 (n=43)	11.7 (n=30)
Are non-profit (n=131)	17.0 (n=37)	17.4 (n=42)	14.0 (n=36)	18.8 (n=16)
Are for-profit (n=185)	11.6 (n=49)	11.8 (n=67)	12.1 (n=46)	9.9 (n=23)
Serve families that are at or below poverty-level or are working poor (n=163)	11.6 (n=38)	13.9 (n=57)	13.0 (n=50)	15.1 (n=18)
Serve families that are middle class and/or higher (n=154)	18.8 (n=48)	14.0 (n=53)	12.8 (n=32)	12.1 (n=21)
Are located in suburbs/rural areas (n=249)	12.4 (n=57)	13.4 (n=87)	12.6 (n=69)	12.7 (n=36)
Are located in urban areas (n=68)	16.9 (n=29)	16.0 (n=23)	14.5 (n=13)	23.3 (n=3)
Are located in the northern region	17.7	14.5	11.8	14.1

(n=110)	(n=33)	(n=42)	(n=18)	(n=17)
Are located in the central region (n=140)	12.5 (n=34)	14.5 (n=41)	13.4 (n=48)	13.4 (n=17)
Are located in the southern region (n=75)	10.7 (n=21)	12.3 (n=31)	12.9 (n=16)	11.9 (n=7)

Also examined was whether the average number of paid days of vacation and/or holidays is associated with the center demographic data provided by NJACCRRA. It should be noted that these analyses are based on the data provided only by those teachers that reported receiving paid holidays or vacation days. Thus, teachers that reported receiving 0 holidays/vacation days were not included in the averages presented. In addition, the samples for some of these categories vary widely and in some cases are quite small. Therefore, this information may not be representative for child care staff throughout the state and should be interpreted cautiously.

The first variable examined the association between average number of days and whether a center received any CBC, ECPA, or ELLI funding (see also Table 9). The average number of vacation days and/or holidays received by infant/toddler teachers and assistants is similar. However, preschool teachers in funded centers report receiving an average of 4 additional paid days off. Their assistants receive 8 additional days.

A center's profit status also was associated with the average number of paid days off and/or holidays. The average number of days received for all groups was higher if they worked in non-profit centers. Teachers received an average of 5 more paid days off. For the assistants, the difference in comparison to the for-profit centers was 2 days for those working in infant/toddler rooms to an average of almost 9 days for those in preschool classrooms.

The income level of the families served in a center (at or below poverty level or working poor versus middle class or higher) did not appear to contribute to infant/toddler teachers or assistants, as well as preschool assistants, receiving more or fewer days. However, for preschool teachers, the number of vacation days increased if they served middle class families.

Staff working in centers located in urban communities received a higher average number of paid vacation days and holidays, as well. This especially was the case for preschool assistants. Region of the state was not clearly associated with staff receiving a higher or lower amount of paid vacation or holidays.

Paid sick leave. In comparison to paid vacation and holidays, a smaller percentage of teachers and assistants report receiving paid sick leave (between 65 – 71 percent vs. 82 – 90 percent) (see Table 10). The range of the total number of paid sick leave days is not as large as compared to paid vacation and holidays, as well. Teachers report receiving between 2 and 16 or 20 days. Assistants report being provided with 1 or 2 to 15 days. However, the average number of paid sick days is 6 or 7 days, or about half as many paid vacation days and/or holidays.

Table 10. *Availability of paid sick leave*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=122)	Preschool (n=150)	I/T (n=105)	Preschool (n=71)
Receive Paid Sick Leave (%)	64.8 (n=79)	70.7 (n=106)	71.4 (n=75)	67.6 (n=48)
Range of number of days	2 – 20	2 – 16	1 – 15	2 – 15
Average number of days	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.2
Average number of sick days received in centers that...				
Receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (n=88)	7.22 (n=18)	8.17 (n=30)	7.88 (n=33)	9.14 (n=7)
No state and/or federal funds (n=145)	6.86 (n=42)	6.27 (n=55)	5.27 (n=26)	5.32 (n=22)
Are non-profit (n=111)	7.53 (n=30)	7.83 (n=41)	8.29 (n=28)	7.83 (n=12)
Are for-profit (n=124)	6.29 (n=31)	6.11 (n=45)	5.32 (n=31)	5.12 (n=17)
Serve families that are at or below poverty-level or are working poor (n=126)	6.8 (n=25)	7.3 (n=50)	7.3 (n=36)	7.2 (n=15)
Serve families that are middle class and/or higher (n=110)	6.9 (n=36)	6.3 (n=37)	5.9 (n=23)	5.2 (n=14)
Are located in suburbs/rural areas (n=179)	6.0 (n=38)	6.1 (n=67)	6.1 (n=48)	5.9 (n=26)
Are located in urban areas (n=57)	8.4 (n=23)	9.4 (n=20)	9.4 (n=11)	9.7 (n=3)
Are located in the northern region (n=94)	7.9 (n=25)	7.2 (n=40)	5.9 (n=14)	5.9 (n=15)
Are located in the central region (n=96)	5.9 (n=22)	6.4 (n=31)	6.9 (n=33)	5.1 (n=10)
Are located in the southern region (n=49)	6.7 (n=14)	6.7 (n=18)	7.2 (n=12)	9.4 (n=5)

Also examined was the average number of sick days based on the center demographic data provided by NJACCRRRA (see Table 10). Once again, this takes into account only those teachers that received sick days. Thus, teachers that reported receiving 0 sick days were not included in the averages presented. In addition, the sample sizes for some individual categories are quite small and thus may not be generalizable to the entire state.

The first variable examined was whether a center received CBC, ECPA, or ELLI funding. A center's receipt of such funding is positively associated with receiving a greater average number of sick days. As compared to their no-funding-received peers, teachers reported an

average of 1.36 to 1.9 more days. Assistants in funded centers had an average of 2.61 to 3.82 more sick days.

Staff in non-profit vs. for-profit centers also reported receiving a greater average number of sick days. Teachers in non-profit centers had at least one more day on average of paid sick leave. Assistants in non-profit centers reported an average of 2-3 more paid sick days.

The income level of the families served in a center was not consistently associated with a greater number of paid sick leave. The reported average number of days for infant/toddler teachers was virtually identical. Preschool teachers in centers serving lower income families had an average of one more day of paid sick leave as compared to those in centers serving higher income families. Assistants in the lower income centers had on average 1.4 to 2 more days of paid sick leave.

In terms of location differences, whether a center was located in a suburban/rural or urban community made a difference in terms of the average number of paid sick days for all four groups. Specifically, the average reported number of paid sick days increased if teachers and assistants worked in urban areas. Teachers working in centers that are located in the northern region of the state had the highest average number of sick days. However, for the assistants, this was true for those working in centers located in the southern region.

Full- or partially paid health care. An additional benefits question asked if teachers and assistants receive full- or partially paid health care as part of their employment. As can be seen in Table 11, the percentages of teachers or assistants who are provided with this benefit are much lower in comparison to paid vacation/holidays and sick leave. Just over one third of teachers report receiving any type of paid health care coverage. This is the case for infant/toddler assistants, as well. Thirty-one percent of preschool assistants report receiving full- or partially paid health care. However, these variations between groups may be related to the small number of staff who reported receipt of full or partially paid healthcare.

Table 11. *Percent of staff receiving full or partially paid healthcare*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=120)	Preschool (n=148)	I/T (n=106)	Preschool (n=68)
Receive full or partially paid health care (n = 161) (%)	39.2 (n=47)	35.8 (n=53)	37.7 (n=40)	30.9 (n=21)
And...				
Receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (n=58)	37.0 (n=10)	51.2 (n=22)	45.2 (n=19)	36.8 (n=7)
No funding (n=99)	40.4 (n=36)	30.0 (n=30)	31.7 (n=20)	28.3 (n=13)
Are non-profit (n=87)	59.1 (n=26)	46.1 (n=24)	54.8 (n=23)	56.0 (n=14)

Are for-profit (n=74)	28.8 (n=21)	31.5 (n=29)	26.6 (n=17)	17.0 (n=7)
Serve families that are at or below poverty-level or are working poor (n=68)	25.9 (n=14)	30.8 (n=24)	33.3 (n=20)	29.4 (n=10)
Serve families that are middle class and/or higher (n=93)	52.3 (n=33)	43.3 (n=29)	43.5 (n=20)	34.4 (n=11)
Are located in suburbs/rural areas (n=121)	36.5 (n=31)	32.5 (n=38)	37.5 (n=33)	33.9 (n=19)
Are located in urban areas (n=40)	50.0 (n=16)	53.6 (n=15)	38.9 (n=7)	20.0 (n=2)
Are located in the northern region (n=65)	55.8 (n=24)	43.1 (n=22)	38.5 (n=10)	34.6 (n=9)
Are located in the central region (n=70)	32.6 (n=15)	35.7 (n=20)	41.0 (n=25)	37.0 (n=10)
Are located in the southern region (n=26)	25.8 (n=8)	26.8 (n=11)	26.3 (n=5)	13.3 (n=2)

Also examined was whether receiving full or partially paid health care varies based on the center demographic data provided by NJACCRRRA (see Table 11). With the exception of infant/toddler teachers, a higher percentage of staff in centers that receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding versus do not receive any of these three funding streams receive some type of paid healthcare. These differences range from 8 to 21 percentage points.

Centers that are non-profit have higher percentages of staff in all four groups reporting access to some type of paid health care. For all but the preschool teachers, the difference in percentages represents at least a 200% increase. Preschool teachers also had higher reported rates of access to paid health care when in a non-profit center in comparison to a for-profit center, but not by such a wide margin (46.1 vs. 31.5 percent).

The income level of the families served in a center (at or below poverty level or working poor versus middle class or higher) is associated with a teacher or assistant receiving full or partially paid health care. The percentage of staff receiving full or partially paid health care increased for all groups if they worked in centers that served middle class or higher children and families. For the two teacher groups, 13 to 26 percent more staff reported receiving health care benefits. Among the assistants, between 5 and 10 percent more staff in these centers reported access to full- or partially paid healthcare.

Whether a center was located in a suburban/rural or urban community was not consistently associated with greater percentages of staff having access to full or partially paid health care. Specifically, the percent of infant/toddler and preschool teachers and infant/toddler assistants increased if centers were located in urban communities. On the other hand, the percent of preschool assistants receiving full or partially paid health care increased if centers were located in suburban or rural communities. The region of the state where staff worked also seemed to contribute to the percentage that received full or partially paid health care. Percentages increased when teachers worked in the Northern and Central regions of the state, as compared to the Southern region.

Participate in an employer-sponsored pension plan. The final benefits question inquired whether teachers or assistants had an employer-sponsored pension plan. Among the four different benefit categories, this one had the lowest percentage of recipients. Only 56 out of a total of 423 staff across all four groups, or 13.2 percent, answered this question affirmatively.

The percentages within each role and ages-served group vary slightly (see Table 12). Ten percent of infant and toddler teachers and 12.3 percent of preschool teacher report that they have such a pension plan. Just under 16 percent of infant/toddler assistants and 17 percent of preschool assistants participate in an employer-sponsored pension plan. It should be noted that the variations between teachers and assistants may be due to the total number of individuals that were asked this question and the even lower number who happened to respond “yes.”

Table 12. *Percent of staff participating in an employer sponsored pension plan*

	Teachers		Assistants	
	I/T (n=109)	Preschool (n=146)	I/T (n=102)	Preschool (n=66)
Participate in employer-sponsored pension (n=56) (%)	10.1 (n=11)	12.3 (n=18)	15.7 (n=16)	16.7 (n=11)
And...				
Receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (n=22)	18.5 (n=5)	16.7 (n=7)	17.5 (n=7)	16.7 (n=3)
No state and/or federal funds (n=30)	6.4 (n=5)	10.1 (n=10)	13.1 (n=8)	15.5 (n=7)
Are non-profit (n=28)	15.8 (n=6)	13.7 (n=7)	22.5 (n=9)	26.1 (n=6)
Are for-profit (n=28)	7.3 (n=5)	12.1 (n=11)	11.3 (n=7)	12.2 (n=5)
Serve families that are at or below poverty-level or are working poor (n=24)	9.4 (n=5)	7.8 (n=6)	15.5 (n=9)	12.1 (n=4)
Serve families that are middle class and/or higher (n=32)	11.3 (n=6)	18.1 (n=12)	15.9 (n=7)	22.6 (n=7)
Are located in suburbs (n=52)	11.3 (n=9)	13.8 (n=16)	18.8 (n=16)	20.0 (n=11)
Are located in urban areas (n=4)	7.7 (n=2)	7.4 (n=2)	0	0
Are located in the northern region (n=19)	8.8 (n=3)	9.8 (n=5)	15.4 (4)	28.0 (n=7)
Are located in the central region (n=20)	8.7 (n=4)	12.7 (n=7)	12.3 (n=7)	7.7 (n=2)
Are located in the southern region (n=17)	13.8 (n=4)	15.0 (n=6)	26.3 (n=5)	13.3 (n=2)

While the number of staff in any role reporting access to an employer-sponsored pension plan is quite small, the center demographics provided by NJACCRRRA were once again used to determine if there are any differences based on these variables. The results presented in Table 12 suggest that certain characteristics may be associated with higher percentages of staff reporting an employer-sponsored pension plan. For example, greater percentages of teacher and assistants in centers receiving CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding or are non-profit report such a benefit. This also is the case for staff that work in centers that serve families that are middle class or higher, or are located in the suburbs. Interestingly, working in a center located in the southern region of the state appears to represent an advantage pension-wise for teachers and infant/toddler assistants. However, the greatest percentage of preschool assistants reporting this benefit work in centers located in the northern region.

Discussion

This report focuses on the wages and benefits received by a sample of teachers and assistants in New Jersey's licensed child care centers that participated in the PEARS study. As highlighted in the initial review of recent wage studies, the pay rate for child care workers in New Jersey would appear to be one of the highest when compared with other states. Yet, hourly rates of pay still dominate the field. Moreover, the average hourly rate for all child care center teachers and assistants is \$10.31 per hour. Assistant teachers earn between \$9.09 and 9.17 per hour on average. Infant/toddler teachers make just over \$10 per hour. The average rate of pay for preschool teachers is about \$1.20 per hour higher.

After converting the sample's hourly rate and number of hours/months worked into an annual rate of pay, preschool teachers earn the highest average annual salary of \$24,927. Infant/toddler teachers earn an average of \$3,398 less per year. Assistants in either age group have average yearly salaries in the low \$19,000 range. Furthermore, 82 percent of full-time infant/toddler teachers, 95.3 percent of their assistants, and 88 percent of preschool assistants earn \$25,000 per year or less. Conversely, the salaries of just 64.5 percent of teachers in preschool classrooms met this threshold. An additional 24.2 percent earn between \$25,001 and \$35,000 per year.

To help put these yearly wages into a larger context within New Jersey, it may be useful to note that they are similar to those earned by home health aides, fast-food cooks, maids and housekeepers, retail stock clerks, and service station or parking lot attendants (United States Department of Labor, 2009). However, while all of these jobs entail minimal levels of initial training, none typically involve caring for and supporting the development of young children. Therefore, what may be more useful is to compare center-based teacher and assistant wages to the average salaries for full-time Head Start lead teachers and assistants that participated in the PEARS study (Freidman, et al., 2009). Head Start is the federally funded program for preschool-aged children. The average annual salary for a full-time Head Start teacher at the time of the PEARS study was \$27,827, or about \$2,900 more than the average reported here for child care center preschool teachers. The slightly higher Head Start pay rates may be related to the higher qualifications needed to work in this setting as mandated by the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-134). On the other hand, Head Start assistants earn on average \$17,626 per

year, which is \$1,885 less than the preschool assistants who formed the sample for the present report.

Future PEARS articles will delve more deeply into the relationship between teacher credential, numbers of hours worked, and compensation. Such comparisons will be especially salient given that in 2008-2009 teachers in the state's former Abbott PreK program (who also need to have a minimum of a BA and an early childhood-focused teacher certification) earned an average of \$55,000 - \$59,999 per year. Assistants in these same classrooms—who are required to attain a minimum of a high school diploma—earned between \$25,000 - \$29,999 per year when in a public school Abbott PreK classroom and an average of \$20,000 - \$24,999 when the classroom was located in a Head Start or private child care center (Barnett et al., 2009).

In terms of benefits, between 85 and 90 percent of center-based child care teachers and assistants reporting receiving paid vacation and/or holidays. The average number of days received is between 13 and 14. In addition, between 65 and 71 percent of teachers and assistants reports receiving paid sick days. The average number of days received is between 6 and 7. However, only about one-third of child care staff receive full- or partially paid healthcare. Finally, just 10 – 17 percent of child care staff participate in an employer-sponsored pension.

The results of the larger PEARS study (Friedman et al., 2009) suggest that in contrast to center-based child care staff, greater percentages of Head Start staff may receive the benefits focused on in this report. Ninety-six percent of Head Start sites provide their teaching staff with paid vacation/holidays. Similarly, 98 percent offer paid sick leave. In addition, 96 percent provide full- or partially paid health care. Forty percent of Head Start sites provide teaching staff with an employer-sponsored pension.

Finally, examining the association between various center demographics supplied by NJACCRRRA and staff pay rates and access to four employment benefits suggests some interesting implications for center-based child care teachers and assistants who might wish to maximize their compensation. For example, infant/toddler teachers may make higher hourly rates, receive greater amounts of paid vacation/holidays, and receive access to full- or partially paid health care if they work in a center that does not receive CBC, ECPA, or ELLI funding (see Table 13). However, their annual salary, number of sick days, and chance of participating in an employer-sponsored pension may increase if they work in a center that does receive such funding.

Table 13. *Association between center demographics and better I/T teacher compensation*

	Receive Funding	No Funding	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Lower Income	Higher Income	Suburbs	Urban	N	C	S
Hourly Pay		X	X			X		X	X		
Annual Salary	X		X			X		X	X		
Vacation		X	X			X		X	X		
Sick	X		X		X			X	X		

Health		X	X			X		X	X		
Pension	X		X			X	X				X

Working in a center that serves middle-income or higher families also increases this group's potential to receive higher pay and benefits. With the exception of access to a pension, the same is true if the center is located in an urban district in the northern part of the state.

Preschool teachers appear to have better compensation if they work in a non-profit center that receives CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding (see Table 14). Generally serving higher income families also is advantageous in terms of the overall compensation. Hourly pay rates may be better in the suburbs, but urban districts may present the opportunity to boost yearly income. As is the case with infant/toddler teachers, the northern region of the state also may be better for all compensation areas except participation in an employer-sponsored pension.

Table 14. Association between center demographics and better preschool teacher compensation

	Receive Funding	No Funding	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Lower Income	Higher Income	Suburbs	Urban	N	C	S
Hourly Pay	X		X			X	X		X		
Annual Salary	X		X			X		X	X		
Vacation	X		X			X		X	X		
Sick	X		X		X			X	X		
Health	X		X			X		X	X		
Pension	X		X			X	X				X

For infant/toddler assistants (see Table 15), a center's receipt of CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding appears to be associated with better compensation in every category except hourly wage. A center being non-profit and located in an urban district also would seem to be advantageous. When higher income families are enrolled, assistants may have higher hourly rates of pay plus increased access to health care and a pension. However, lower-income centers may offer better annual salaries and greater numbers of vacation and sick days.

Table 15. Association between center demographics and better I/T assistant compensation

	Receive Funding	No Funding	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Lower Income	Higher Income	Suburbs	Urban	N	C	S
Hourly Pay		X	X			X		X	X		
Annual Salary	X		X		X			X		X	
Vacation	X		X		X			X	X	X	
Sick	X		X		X			X			X

Health	X		X			X		X		X	
Pension	X		X			X	X				X

Finally, preschool assistants may make higher rates of pay when in a non-profit center that does not receive CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding, but have access to better benefits if a center receives such funding and is non-profit. Serving higher-income families also may increase the chance of a better pay rate and access to health and pension plans. Not surprisingly, a center's location in the suburbs may also increase yearly salary and the opportunity to receive these two specific benefits.

Table 16. *Association between center demographics and better preschool assistant compensation*

	Receive Funding	No Funding	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Lower Income	Higher Income	Suburbs	Urban	N	C	S
Hourly Pay		X	X			X		X	X		
Annual Salary		X	X			X	X		X		
Vacation	X		X		X			X	X		
Sick	X		X		X			X			X
Health	X		X			X	X			X	
Pension	X		X			X	X		X		

In sum, when a center receives CBC, ECPA, and/or ELLI funding and is non-profit, teachers and assistants in both ages-served groups may receive better compensation. Serving higher income families may also be advantageous. Working in an urban center may result in a greater number of vacation and sick days. While few staff have access to an employer-sponsored pension, the likelihood of this may increase if a center is located in a suburb. Centers that are in the northern or central part of the state also may be able to consistently offer better overall compensation to teachers and assistants.

Limitations and Conclusion

While this report relies on data from child care staff from throughout New Jersey, its limitations should be highlighted. The initial set of limitations relates to the PEARS data. First—and as noted above—the data analyzed and presented here are from licensed, center-based child care teachers and assistants who reported working at least 35 hours a week and 9 months per year. Secondly, the centers where these individuals were employed were limited to those located in school districts that were targeted for the proposed preschool expansion. In both cases, the wages and benefits received by those who did not participate in the study or whose data were not analyzed may not be similar to the results described here. Third, the data that was used relied solely on self-report and was not verified in any way. Therefore, it is possible that some of the data used actually could be inaccurate.

The second set of limitations is related to the analyses using the center demographic info provided by NJACCRRRA. First, the data on the income level of the families served represents the knowledge base of staff at the individual county-level resource and referral agencies, rather than a direct survey of parents or analysis of center child care income documentation. Thus, it is possible that the estimation of family income categories may not be entirely accurate. Secondly, because the sample sizes within each specific group (e.g. infant/toddler teachers working in for-profit centers, or preschool assistants working in urban centers) were so small—and sometimes uneven—the results for these analyses should be interpreted with great caution. It is possible that the results would be different if the data were weighted to represent the actual proportion of centers and staff within each individual category.

However, given that the wage results are aligned with what is reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the wage data would appear to be representative of what is received by teachers and assistants working in licensed child care centers throughout the state. Moreover, this study demonstrates the compensation received still remains quite low in terms of average annual salary, as well as receipt of full- or partially paid health care and an employer-sponsored pension. The wages and benefits for center-based child care teaching staff also appear to be lower in comparison to those received by Head Start teaching staff.

While the data reported here is useful for providing more up-to-date information on child care wages in New Jersey, it also brings about some additional questions. For example, are the wages and benefits received by New Jersey's licensed child care workforce impacting centers' ability to consistently recruit and retain employees? Are there any variations in recruitment and retention issues based on role (teacher versus assistant) and ages served? Given the difference in rates of pay between infant/toddler and preschool teachers, recruiting and retaining staff to work in classrooms serving the state's youngest children may be a specific area of concern.

At the same time—and given the state's push to provide high quality PreK (Barnett et al., 2009)—of particular interest is the effect of this specific program on the wages paid to preschool teachers working in licensed child care centers. Are preschool teacher wages higher than those for infant/toddler teachers due to competition from PreK providers? Or, do these higher wages represent a growing awareness of the importance of preschool education and parents seeking out child care programs that are perceived to be of higher quality?

Also unknown is the extent to which wages and benefits for all four groups contribute to—or detract from—the quality of children's experiences while enrolled in these centers. Given the federal focus on improving the quality of all early learning settings, as well as the potential for New Jersey to expand access to publicly funded preschool, all of these topics should be of interest to researchers and early care and education stakeholders.

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