

Characteristics of the

Infant Toddler Workforce

in Illinois



Key Findings

45% of teaching staff in licensed centers work with infants and toddlers

Infant/toddler teaching staff are more racially diverse than their colleagues who teach older children

Illinois' infant/toddler teachers have higher educational qualifications than the national average

Infant/toddler teachers make less per hour than their similarly qualified counterparts who work with preschoolers

Characteristics of the Infant/Toddler Workforce in Illinois

According to several national sources including Zero to Three,¹ the National Survey of Early Care and Education,² and the National Workforce Registry Alliance,³ professionals who work with infants and toddlers are typically less educated and are less compensated than peers working with preschool-age children. This is troubling because of the wide body of research, including the 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council⁴ that illustrates the rapid growth and development of the brain in the first years of life. When babies and toddlers have caregivers who are consistent, nurturing, and have knowledge to guide a child's growth and development, they are able to achieve success in learning across several key domains including cognitive development; socioemotional development; general learning competencies; and health and physical well-being.⁵

In Illinois, there are nearly 11,000 licensed center-based and home-based early care and education programs that are licensed to serve infants and toddlers. The purpose of this brief is to describe the characteristics of teaching staff working with infants and toddlers in licensed center-based programs in order to provide appropriate context for considering policy and programmatic supports for this workforce.

Size and Demographics of the Infant/Toddler Workforce

The Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Registry contains administrative data on a total of 38,657 individuals working in 3,280 licensed child care centers⁶ and two-thirds of those centers have staff who reported working with infants and toddlers. Table 1 shows that of the 27,373 records for teaching staff that include age group served, 45% work specifically with infants and toddlers and represent the greatest proportion of the overall workforce. While not included in the analyses for purposes of this report, it is important to remember that family child care providers are also a part of this workforce. According to the Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) System, there are approximately 6,600 licensed family child care providers with infants and toddlers enrolled in their program.⁷

Table 1: Licensed Center Teaching Staff by Age Group Served

	Teachers		Assistant Teachers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Infants and Toddlers Only	6,737	41.9%	5,594	49.5%	12,331	45.1%
Preschool Only	7,122	44.3%	4,493	39.7%	11,615	42.4%
School-Age Only	1,673	10.4%	820	7.3%	2,493	9.1%
Multiple Age Groups	537	3.3%	397	3.5%	934	3.4%
Total	16,069	99.9%	11,304	100%	27,373	100%

Demographics

Gender, Age, and Language

As a whole, the early care and education workforce in Illinois is made up primarily of women, with 97% of all teaching staff in licensed centers being female. For the infant/toddler workforce specifically, 99% of teachers and assistant teachers are women. This is the highest percentage for teaching staff across the board based on age group served.

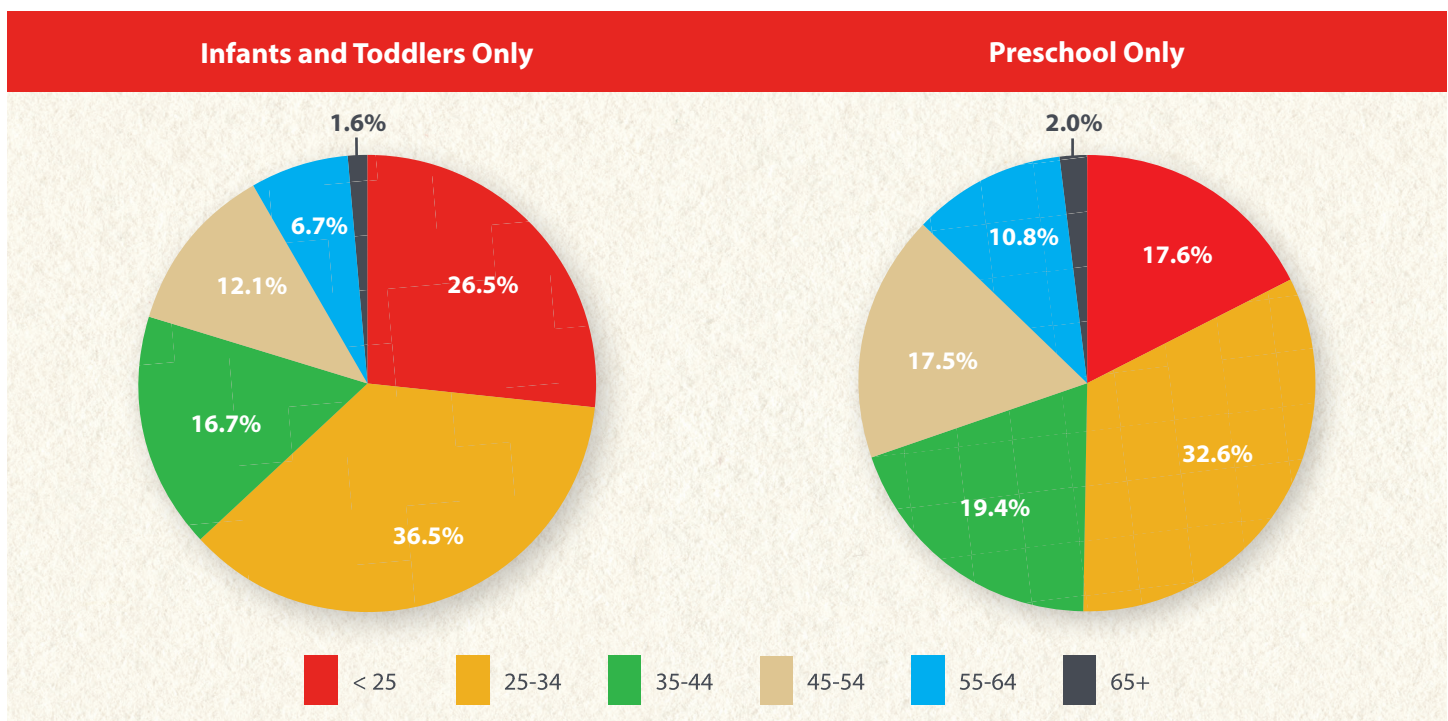
The average age for teaching staff in licensed centers is 35. Infant/toddler teaching staff are younger on average than their counterparts who teach preschool. In fact, nearly two-thirds of infant/toddler staff are under the age of 35 compared to half of the preschool staff, as shown in Figure 1.

Given that English and Spanish are the two most widely spoken languages in Illinois,⁸ it is no surprise that they are the two most common primary languages spoken by licensed center-based teachers and assistant teachers (91% and 5.3%, respectively). The infant/toddler workforce closely mirrors these overall percentages. In addition, there are 18 other primary languages spoken by infant/toddler teaching staff.

Table 2: Gender, Age, and Language of Licensed Center Teaching Staff by Age Group Served

	Gender	Mean Age	Primary Language
Infants and Toddlers Only	99.0% Female 1.0% Male	34	90.4% English 5.9% Spanish
Preschool Only	97.2% Female 2.8% Male	37	91.2% English 5.1% Spanish
School-Age Only	87.1% Female 12.9% Male	33	94.4% English 2.8% Spanish
Multiple Age Groups	97.2% Female 2.8% Male	34	92.8% English 4.5% Spanish

Figure 1: Age Cohorts of Licensed Center Teaching Staff by Age Group Served

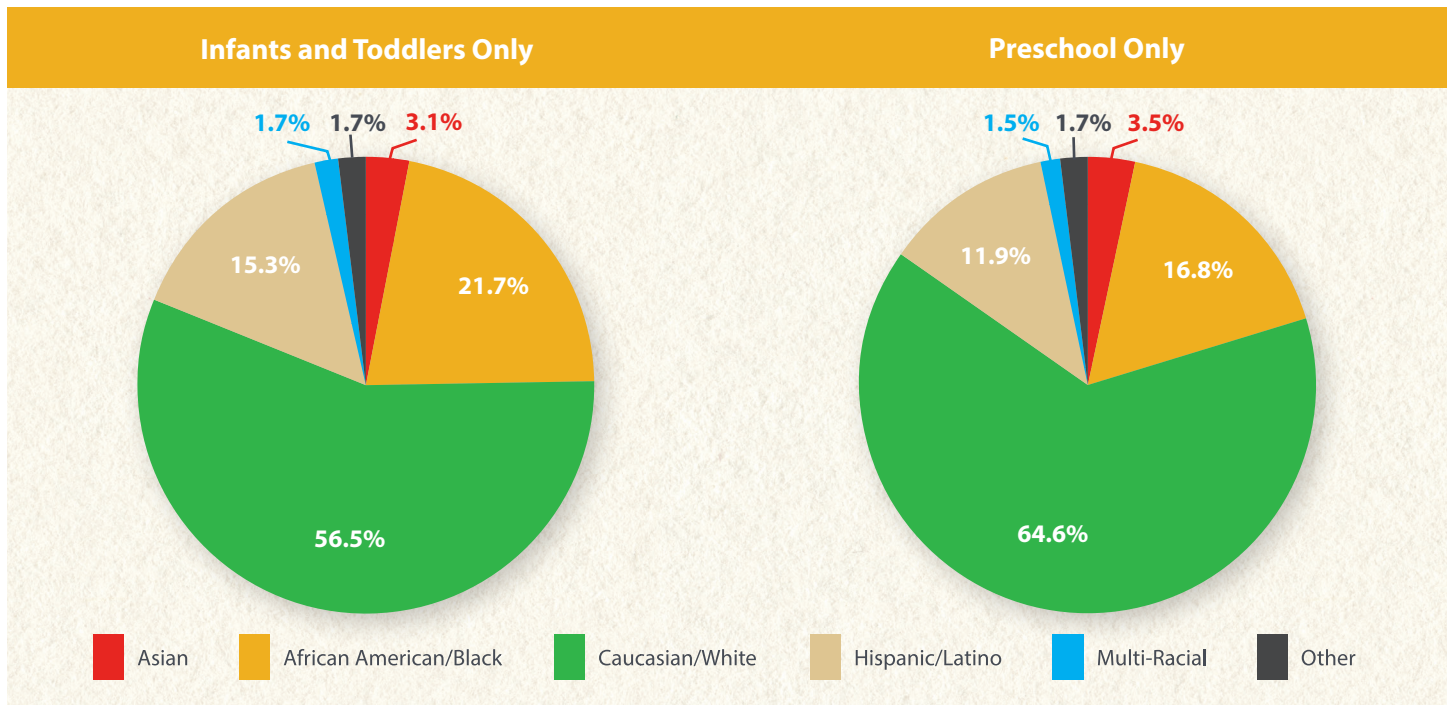


Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

Broadly speaking, Gateways Registry data reveal that assistant teachers in licensed centers are more racially diverse than teachers. Taken as a whole, teaching staff in licensed centers are 60% white, 20% black, and 13.6% Hispanic/Latino. It is interesting to note that the infant/toddler workforce appears to have greater racial diversity than their colleagues who teach older children.

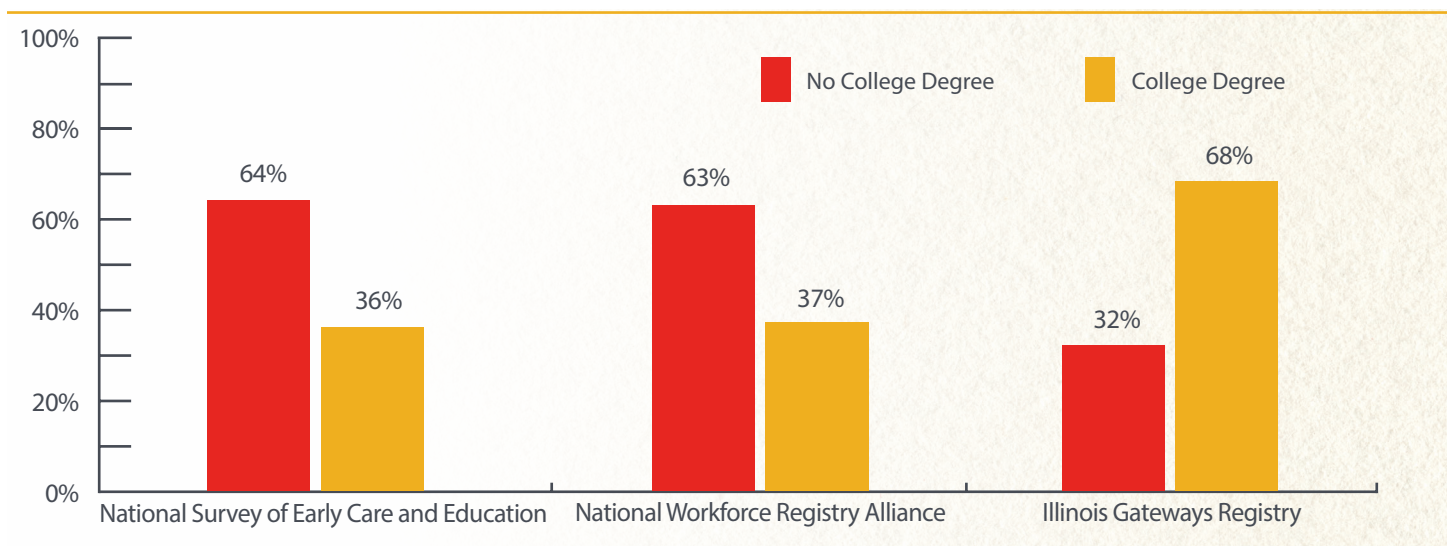
Figure 2: Race/Ethnicity of Licensed Center Teaching Staff by Age Group Served



Education

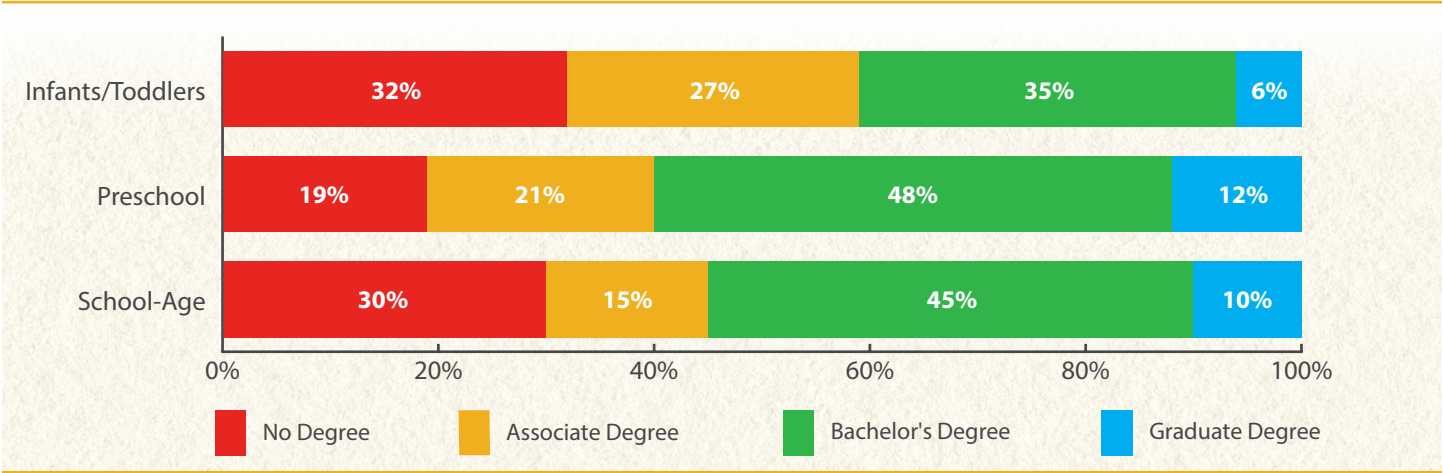
Infant/toddler teachers in Illinois have higher levels of education in comparison to national data. Both the recent National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) and National Workforce Registry Alliance 2012 data set show that less than 40% of infant/toddler teachers have college degrees compared to 68% in Illinois.

Figure 3: National Data on Infant/Toddler Teachers with Degrees Compared to Illinois



The NSECE 2013 report of the initial findings about the number and characteristics of the workforce also revealed that center-based teachers working with infants and toddlers have lower levels of education than those working with preschool-age children. Only 36% of teachers serving 0-3 year-olds had an associate degree or higher compared to 62% of their colleagues serving 3-5 year-olds. Data from the National Workforce Registry Alliance 2012 data set support this finding, showing that 37% of teachers of infants and toddlers have an associate degree or higher compared to 65% of those teaching preschoolers. Illinois data reveal a similar gap though not as large, with 68% infant/toddler teachers having a college degree compared to 81% of preschool teachers.

Figure 4: Educational Attainments of Licensed Center Teachers by Age Group Served



Wages

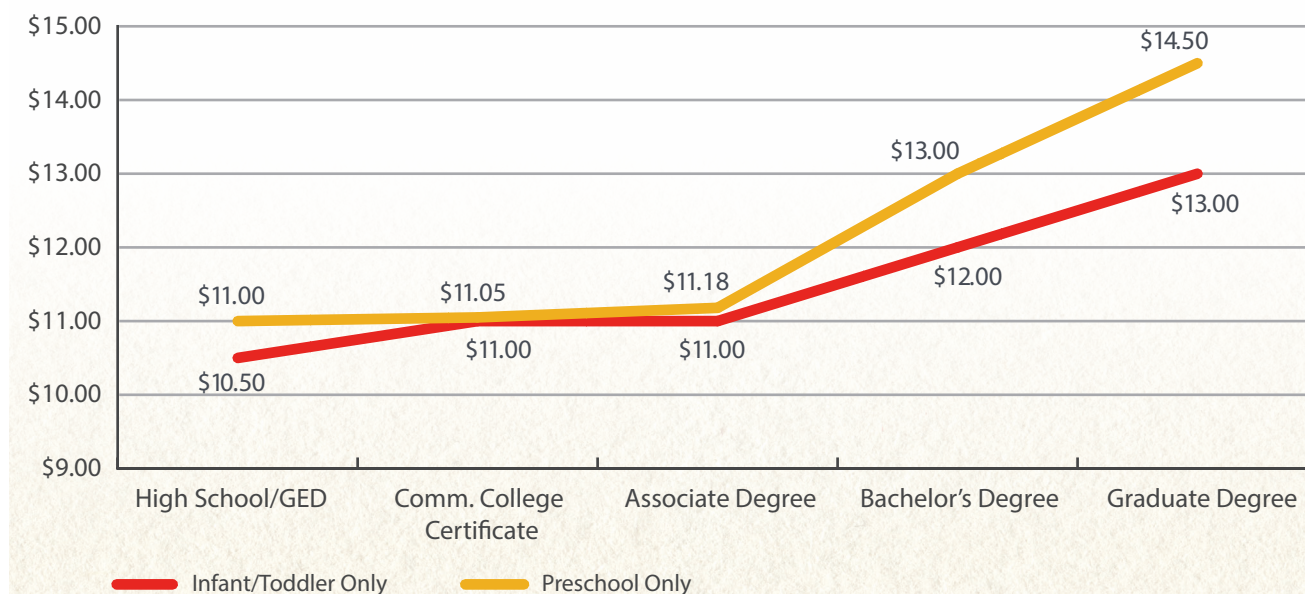
The recent National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) found the median hourly wage for all teachers and caregivers working with children birth to three was \$9.30 compared to \$11.90 for those working with preschool-age children. A similar difference appears in Illinois, with teachers who work solely with infants and toddlers making an average of \$1.35 less per hour than those working with preschoolers.

Table 3: Wages of Licensed Center Teachers by Age Group Served

Age Group Served	Mean	Std. Dev.	10th Percentile	Median	90th Percentile
Infant/Toddler Only	\$11.75	\$2.41	\$9.00	\$11.25	\$14.60
Preschool Only	\$13.10	\$3.51	\$9.50	\$12.33	\$17.86
School-Age Only	\$11.80	\$2.90	\$9.00	\$11.00	\$15.03
Multiple Ages	\$11.39	\$2.19	\$9.00	\$11.00	\$14.04

This gap is present even when controlling for level of education. Comparing infant/toddler and preschool teachers, the difference in average hourly wage increases as the level of education rises. For teachers that have an associate degree, there is only a difference of \$0.18 an hour compared to a difference of \$1.00 per hour for those with a bachelor's degree. Given the importance of compensation and qualifications for the early care and education workforce at large, this is an important finding and one worth further investigation.

Figure 5: Wage Differences for Licensed Center Teachers Based on Education and Ages Served



Conclusion

Over 45% of the teaching staff (teachers and assistant teachers) in licensed center-based programs in Illinois work with infants and toddlers. They are slightly younger and slightly more racially diverse than their peers who teach preschool-age children. Infant/toddler teachers in Illinois have higher educational qualifications than the national average; however, compared to colleagues that teach preschoolers they are less educated and receive less compensation even when controlling for level of education.

In order to ensure that our youngest children have a strong foundation on which to build, it is essential that the professionals who nurture and care for infants and toddlers be competent and well-compensated. Understanding the characteristics of Illinois' infant/toddler workforce is an important step toward thinking about program and policy changes that will address the needs of this specific population. Data from the Gateways to Opportunity Registry will allow us to continue to monitor these characteristics and trends over time.



Notes

- ¹ Zero to Three. (2010). *Professional Development For the Infant/Toddler Early Care and Education Workforce*. Retrieved from <http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/state-community-policy/nitcci/professional-development-for-the-infant-toddler-workforce.pdf>
- ² National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team. (2013). *Number and Characteristics of Early Care and Education (ECE) Teachers and Caregivers: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*. OPRE Report #2013-38, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- ³ Mayfield, W. (2013). *The National Registry Alliance 2012 Workforce Dataset: A Review of Workforce Trends*. Retrieved from <http://www.registryalliance.org/our-work/publications-and-resources>
- ⁴ Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Data were pulled March 1, 2015 for all active Registry Members working in direct service positions.
- ⁷ INCCRRA. (2015). *Custom Search: Licensed Family Child Care Providers with Infants or Toddlers Enrolled* [Data file]. Available from <http://www.inccrra.org>
- ⁸ United States Census Bureau. (2014) *B1 6001: Language spoken at home by ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over* [Data file]. Available from <http://factfinder.census.gov>

About Us

The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is a statewide organization which—in partnership with its 16 local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies—is a recognized leader, catalyst, and resource for making high quality, affordable early care and education and school-age care options available for children and families in Illinois. INCCRRA administers Gateways to Opportunity—a statewide professional development support system designed to provide guidance, encouragement, and recognition to individuals and programs serving children, youth, and families.

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1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, Illinois 61701 | (866) 697-8278 | www.ilgateways.com

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