

# D1: Stabilizing the Early Care and Education Workforce by Centering Compensation and Well-Being

Thursday, June 29, 2023

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | L'Enfant Ballroom ABCD (Livestreamed)

## 1. Descriptive Information

### D1: Stabilizing the Early Care and Education Workforce by Centering Compensation and Well-Being

Although the well-being of early educators is important for their ability to both work with young children and create stable environments for working families, historically, child care workers in the United States have earned very low wages and had limited access to benefits. In turn, teacher turnover is quite high and well-being is low. Conditions only worsened in the wake of COVID-19—the workforce has not regrown to its pre-pandemic size, child care centers report widespread difficulty with staffing, and data from a variety of sources suggest rates of teacher depression of 30 percent or higher.

This session highlights both the central role that well-being plays in teachers' decisions to stay in the field and the importance of how teachers are compensated for their work in determining their well-being. In exploring a recent policy solution, this panel takes an applied approach, seeking to understand the size of the investment needed to make compensation reform effective, as well as identifying pitfalls and concerns regarding policy implementation. Discussant Kathryn Kigera will help keep the post-presentation conversation strengths based and solutions oriented..

#### Presenters

**Kyong-Ah Kwon**, University of Oklahoma

**Lieny Jeon**, University of Virginia

**Anna Markowitz**, University of California, Los Angeles

**Erica Greenberg**, Urban Institute

**Kathryn Kigera**, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Washington, D.C.

#### Scribe

**Katie Caldwell**

**Number of Attendees: 42**

## 2. Documents/Presentations Shared (Please list any electronic documents, PowerPoint presentations, or web links used during the session.) **Collect presenter PowerPoints or other documents on the flash drive provided.**

- Longitudinal Head Start Teacher Turnover Study
- Pres 2 jeon
- Pres 3 markowitz
- Pres 4 erica

## 3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Kyong-Ah Kwon, Longitudinal Head Start Teacher Turnover Study**
  - Leader of the Happy Teacher Project
  - Turnover studies are not new, but there is a lack of longitudinal patterns and classroom level studies as predictors of teacher stress and turnover
  - Compared Head Start (HS) teacher vs. non Head Start teachers
    - Found that HS teachers suffer more in their wellbeing despite having higher levels of education and pay. They have higher job demand and the higher needs of the families they serve.
    - What pattern exists in HS teacher turnover over time?
      - The first 3 years of employment- high teacher turnover. Only 67% stayed past 1 year and by 3 years only 33% remained.
    - What characteristics of children, families, and classrooms/programs are associated with HS teacher turnover?

- Increased turnover with higher percentage of children with disabilities
  - Teachers are more likely to stay with resources such as: high teacher/child ratio, less job stress, wage satisfaction
- 2,800 employed by Educare schools, data from 2007-2022 school years
- Survival analysis used
- Findings suggest:
  - the importance of supporting new teachers, especially in the first year, including a more intentional onboarding process, intensive mentoring, and individualized support and encouragement.
  - the importance of balancing job demands and resources: reducing job demands AND increasing job resources to mitigate stress and burnout, which would promote teacher retention.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Lieny Jeon, *Center-based and Home-based Childcare Providers' Well-being Profiles and Turnover Intention***
  - Word cloud presented of words providers used to describe their careers in child care- both positive and negative words (rewarding but challenging)
  - Workforce is disproportionately made up of women of color who have been historically marginalized
  - Low wages and resources
  - What are the profiles of center-based and home-based child care providers regarding psychological and professional well-being, coping and compensation?
  - Do they differ by program type?
  - Sample: 1129 center-based and 888 home-based providers across the US.
    - Providers completed a survey and returned by mail
  - Center-based
    - Higher stress level
  - Home-based
    - Much higher number of work hours than Center-based
  - Implications:
    - Holistic well-being is an important indicator of turnover intention
    - Profile four (best group) was more prevalent among home-based providers.
    - For other profiles, home-based providers generally had lower well-being state and higher work hours
    - Salary was low across all types and profiles
    - Differentiated support for providers is needed to promote well-being
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Anna Markowitz, *Child Care Teachers' Compensation and Wellbeing from 2019 to 2022: Evidence from 100 Child Care Centers***
  - Evidence from 100 child care centers, data from 2019-2022
  - Research questions:
    - How did child care teachers' wages change from pre-pandemic to 2022 and how were wages impacted by inflation?
    - What benefits were available to child care teachers throughout this time period?
    - How did levels of child care teachers' financial insecurity, food insecurity, and depression change from 2019 to 2022?
  - Data and measure
    - Teachers invited to take surveys in May 2019, May 2020, September 2020, July 2021, and May 2022.
    - Response rates were relatively high (58%-77%).
    - Surveys measured teacher report of wages, benefits, financial worries, food insecurity, depressive symptoms (used the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale -CESD-SF).
  - Analysis
    - Included Preschool Development Grant (PDG) survey responses from over 700 teachers employed at 100 centers at any of the 4 time points
    - Teacher composition at these centers was stable over time

- Results reflect similar trends when limited to a sample of 137 individual teachers who participated in every survey wave.
    - For each outcome of interest, we tested the difference of the mean or proportion in 2020, 2021, and 2022 from the 2019 baseline level using OLS regression.
  - When adjusted for inflation, teacher wage increased somewhat in 2020 and then stagnated
  - Benefits were not available to most teachers at any point
  - Financial concerns declined from 2019-2020 but now exceed pre-pandemic levels
  - Half of teachers reported food insecurity
  - Prevalence of depression increased sharply from pre-pandemic levels
  - Discussion
    - Financial insecurity, food insecurity and symptoms of depression were the same or higher in 2022 than they were both prior to Covid and in 2020.
    - Increases in financial hardship align with trends in wages, which declined 4% in real value from 2020 to 2022 amid high inflation
    - Patterns are troubling for teachers and for children and families they serve- teachers emotional well-being is connected to both retention and quality of care
    - Findings could underestimate the problem given center characteristic (early adopters of pandemic grant money)
    - Should not expect larger changes in well-being with small changes in wage
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Erica Greenburg, *An Implementation Study of DC's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund***
  - Implementation study of DC's Early Child Educator Pay Fund
  - Two policy solutions: increased compensation and affordable healthcare for child care providers
  - Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund
    - Funded with an additional tax on high income earners in DC (those making over \$250,000 annually)
  - ECE Pay equity fund case study
    - Historical context, vision and goals, early implementation of the Fund and future directions
  - HealthCare4ChildCare and Wellbeing
    - Using new tax revenue for affordable health care (approx. 600 people gained health insurance)
  - Findings will be shared in the fall of 2023
- **Summary of Presentation #5 Kathleen Kigera (follow up to Erica Greenburg about the DC Early Child Educator Pay Fund)**
  - Centers do not have to participate in the subsidy system to participate in the educator pay fund
  - Total workforce investments are really key as well- DC has paid family leave for all of the city
  - Added two core knowledge areas for ECE professional development- staff financial wellness and wellbeing (at request of providers)
  - Also have partnerships to provide mental health consultation through the department of behavior health to assist in addressing negative occurrence in the communities some child care center serve

#### 4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Q: Have you looked at age of providers in your data (to Kyong-Ah and Lieny)
- A: When providers get older they have less options. It is truly a challenge in the pipeline. At Oklahoma University, the average graduate salary is \$57k a year, a graduate of the ECE bachelor's degree program is \$37K. Anna- working with research providers in New Orleans that provide free child care for younger workers.
- Q: Measures of compensation. How could you create a potential measure relative to the ideal to show how low that really is. Thoughts on that?
- A: Anna- we have tried. We allow folks to put in their wage how they are paid (hourly, annually). Kyong-Ah: we will ask both but occasionally the provider will be confused. And ask how they feel about their wage (will often feel ok about their wage because they don't have another option).

- Q: I wonder if we should move to measuring a total compensation model within the field. K-12 teachers get paid time off, retirement, which makes the gap even bigger.
- A: Leiny- we also consistently find that ECE providers have a 2<sup>nd</sup> job; about 20%
- Q: Leaving Early Head Start- are those people leaving for higher paying/low stress or leaving the workforce entirely? Where are they going? Also teachers say they are happy with the training they get.
- A: Kyong-Ah- There are many different ways to define “turnover” (just changing a classroom is turnover for a child but the teacher is still part of the ECE workforce). Anna: Louisiana- track all lead teachers in the state. Almost none of them are moving into another ECE position (3%). A higher proportion in VA are moving to another site (25%). So perhaps this differs by state or region.

**5. Summary of Key issues raised** (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of sessions summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we’re looking for)

- Providers are underpaid and often have issues providing for their own basic needs.
- Providers well-being is more highly impacted when working with families with higher needs and high stress job situations (high teacher/child ratios, longer work hours). This leads to higher turnover, especially in the first three years.
- A promising practice is being studied in DC- the DC Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, which takes additional tax revenue and boosts wages for child care providers while also offering affordable health care as a tandem approach to supporting child care providers.