



Alameda County Early Care and Education CalWORKs Apprenticeship

Challenges in the Early Care and Education Workforce

The early care and education (ECE) system is critical for children and families and provides meaningful supports to employers, communities, and local economies. Alameda County's ECE system, like many across the country, was on perilous footing before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Now more than ever, ECE providers face significant challenges to providing quality, equitable access, and affordable care. The shortage of licensed child care is particularly acute in infant and toddler settings, with capacity for fewer than one out of every ten infants and toddlers in the county.

According to a 2019 study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center:

- Insufficient ECE costs businesses \$1,150 per working parent each year
- Reliable ECE reduces employee absences by 20–30 percent and reduces turnover by 37–60 percent, with women disproportionately impacted by lack of access to ECE
- In California's current landscape, each dollar invested in ECE generates as much as \$1.88 in increased economic activity

Systemic and historic disinvestment in the ECE system has harmed child care providers, who are primarily women of color with years of experience, education, and expertise, and yet are poorly compensated.

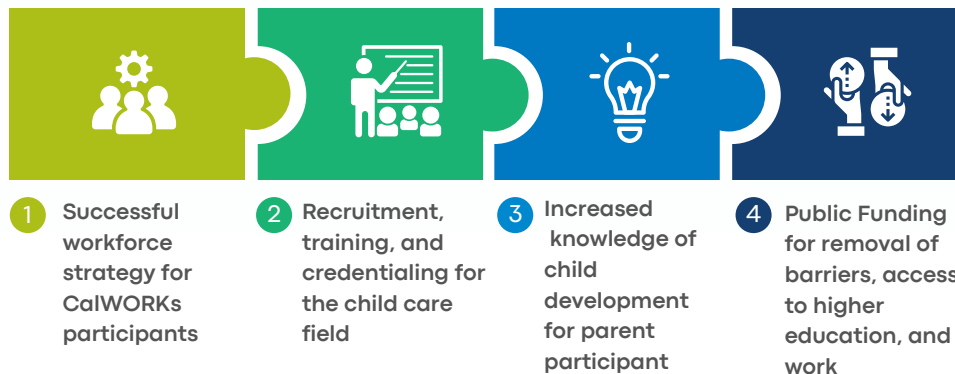
ECE Workforce Characteristics:

- Aging educators: 24.2% of teaching staff and 50% of child center directors are over 50
- Lacking diversity at higher levels of teaching staff: Assistant teachers are more likely to be people of color (78.4%) than teachers (64.3%), resulting in assistant teachers more closely reflecting the race/ethnic composition of children served. Career pipelines that allow for credentialing are important public policy investments to create a more diverse ECE workforce at all levels
- Losing educators: The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue with many ECE professionals leaving the field to retire early or pursue other opportunities. Estimates show that Alameda County has lost over 760 ECE jobs since the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the Alameda County ECE CalWORKs Apprenticeship

Depending on family size and length of time on aid, **CalWORKs families pose an ongoing cost of \$230,000 per year** (nearly \$13,000 per participant) to the social safety net.

The ECE CalWORKs Apprenticeship provides a **four-fold value proposition**



Program Design

The program is aligned to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing targets, as well as Title 5 and Head Start requirements. At the end of the program, apprentices earn a California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit. There are opportunities for apprentices to continue in a second and third tier of the apprenticeship, in which they attain an AA and BA degree, respectively as well as Child Development permits at higher levels.

- On the job training and mentorship
- No-cost college courses and tutoring
- Stipends and wage tied to professional milestones
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“My journey to being a toddler teacher...I’m a single parent of two children. The YMCA apprentice program offered me the assistance I need to complete my dreams and goals... My children are my motivation and happiness – what keeps me going. This fall I will have the opportunity to work in my own classroom as a result of this program. I’m beyond excited to meet the children and families.”

-Participant Parent

Program Outcomes



Participant Completion

As of December 2021, there are 25 graduates (74%) who have completed all requirements for the Associate Teacher Permit. Of those, 23 (92%) are continuing in classes to earn an AA degree and 1 apprentice is working on obtaining a BA.



Participant Retention

Since the inception of the program in 2019, there have been 65 CalWORKs apprentices, which includes 19 who are enrolled for the 2021-2022 program year. While the program was able to pivot rapidly amidst the pandemic, several apprentices had to withdraw due to COVID related issues.



Job Placement and Wages

Overall, 28 apprentices were hired by an ECE program, including YMCA or are in the process of getting hired, 17 or 60% continue to be employed. The average wage for apprentices from the 2020-2021 cohort was \$17.35/hr. The wage increases to \$18.91/hr. upon completion of 12 units and receiving the Associate Teacher Permit.



Budget

The cost of the Tier 1 program for a cohort of 20 apprentices is approximately \$320,000 – about \$16,000 per apprentice.



Return on Investment

For apprentices that complete the program and obtain employment, policymakers can expect to see a return on investment to the social safety net after 17 months. For each dollar spent on ECE, studies estimate that long-term benefits to the community range from \$7 to \$17, including better educational and professional attainment.

¹ Meloy, B., Gardner, M., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). Untangling the evidence on preschool effectiveness: Insights for policymakers. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

² Jacobs, K., Powell, A., & Thomason, S. (2019). Investing in Early Care and Education: The Economic Benefits for California. Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley Labor Center.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics statewide data, September 2021