

South Carolina Early Care & Education Workforce Study 2018



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of Social Services' Division of Early Care and Education

Insights from SC ECE Workforce Study 2018

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EDUCATION

Introduction

Effective instruction in ECE settings go beyond subject-area content knowledge and require understanding that includes *“a sophisticated understanding of the child’s cognitive and socioemotional development; knowledge of a broad range of subject matter content areas; and skills for developing high-quality interactions and relationships with children, their families, and other professionals.”* (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015).

Each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia set their own teacher qualification standards for early educators. These standard requirements vary widely across and within states by program type and source of funds, such as center-based child care, home-based programs, and public preschool programs. Qualifications are set by the federal government for military child care, Early Head Start, and Head Start programs.

National ECE Education

Regulatory requirements beginning in 2007 required Head Start teachers to pursue and obtain degrees. Between 1997 and 2014, the share of Head Start teachers with an associate or bachelor’s degree increased by 61%, and the share of assistant teachers with a degree increased by 24% (NSECE, 2013). Nationally, center-based programs for 3-5-year-old children had 45% of teachers with a bachelor’s degree, 17% with an associate degree, and 13% with completed high school (HS) or less (NSECE, 2013). Among infant/toddler teachers in the nation, 19% had earned a bachelor’s degree, 17% an associate degree, and 28% had a high school education as their highest qualification (NSECE, 2013).

State ECE Education

SC ECE Workforce Study 2018 asked the ECE workforce about the highest level of education they had achieved and the subject area of this education. The highest level of education was categorized in 6 levels starting with high school education/GED, some college credits indicating a level between high school and college, a 2-year degree Associate degree, a 4-year bachelor’s degree (BA), some graduate credits, or a graduate degree (MA, MS, M.Ed., Ed.D., or Ph.D.) The areas of study listed in the survey were Business Administration, Early Childhood Education/Child Development, Elementary or Secondary Education, Social Work, Special Education and an “Other” category. Descriptive analyses were used to disaggregate the data by child care setting, child care worker position, education levels, and race to reveal underlying patterns and insights.

Education Levels

Survey respondents (n=3,539) reported the highest education level they earned and the follow-up question on the area of their education (n=3,278). Ten percent of SC ECE workforce earned a HS diploma or GED as their highest level of education and 22% have some college credits but do not have a college degree. Most of the respondents indicated that they have a bachelor's degree (24%) or higher education that includes some graduate credit hours or a completed graduate degree (25%, see Figure 1). In SC, the minimal educational requirement for regulated child care facilities in South Carolina is a high school diploma/GED, with additional requirements placed by the state and federal agencies funding preschool programs. Results from the workforce reveals that 90% of SC ECE workforce exceed this minimal licensing requirement (see Table 1).

Figure 1. Highest education earned by SC ECE Workforce 2018

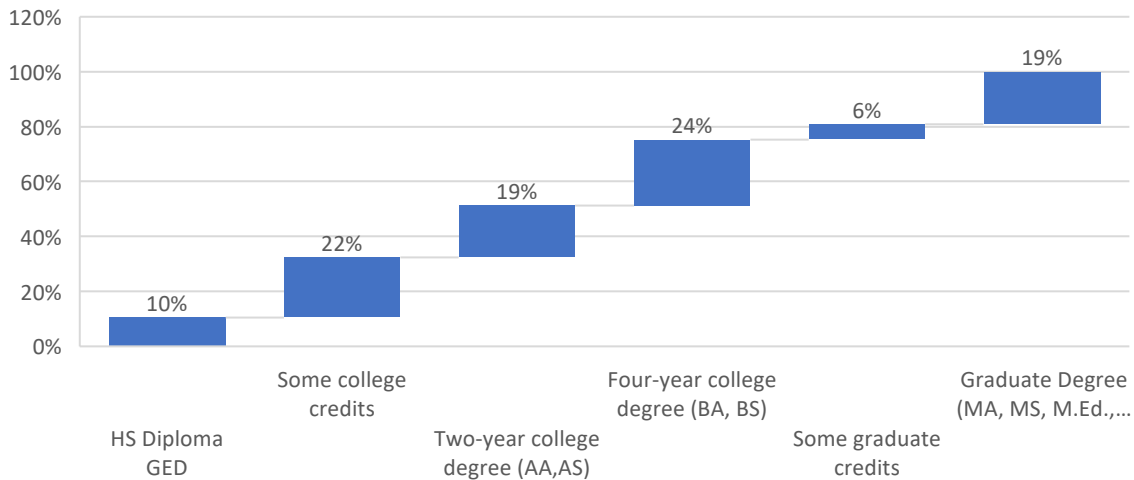


Table 1. Distribution of level of highest education reported by SC ECE Workforce 2018

Highest Level of Education Earned	Frequency	Percent
HS Diploma/GED	367	10%
Some college credits	781	22%
Two-year college degree (AA, AS)	669	19%
Four-year college degree (BA, BS)	848	24%
Some graduate credits	196	6%
Graduate Degree (MA, MS, M.Ed., Ed.D., or Ph.D.)	678	19%

68% of SC ECE workforce have an Associate degree or higher education

Area of specialization

A follow-up question on education asked about the subject area of the education. Although 73% of the respondents with a high school/GED indicated that their area of specialization was “early childhood education/child development”, all high school/GED respondents (n=216) were excluded from this analysis with the understanding that although there have been some specialized vocational classes, a high school education is designed to be a broader education. Of the respondents who reported “some college credits” or higher, 53% indicated that their education was in Early Childhood/Child Development which challenges a common assumption that this is a fallback career. Several respondents (23%) described their area of education in the Other category that included related fields such as psychology.

Table 2. Distribution of the area of specialization reported by SC ECE workforce 2018

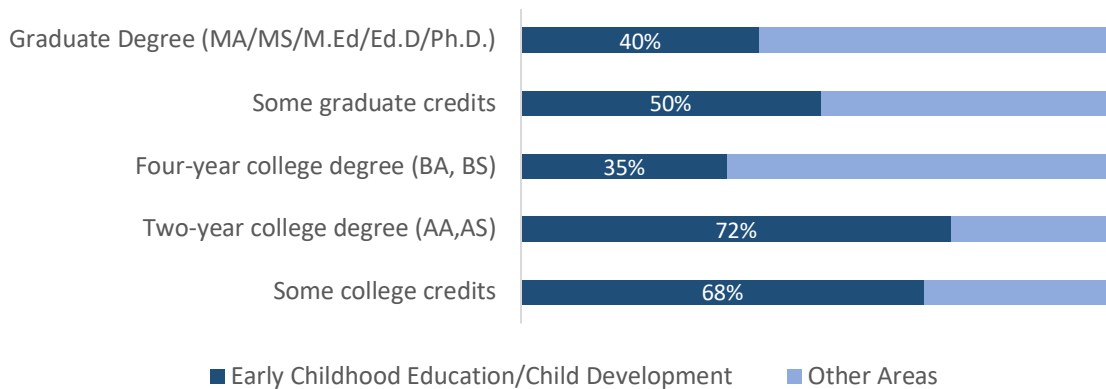
Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percent
Business Administration	231	8%
Early Childhood Education/Child Development	1,608	53%
Elementary or Secondary Education	335	11%
Social Work	104	3%
Special Education	69	2%
Other	715	23%

53%* of SC ECE workforce earned a degree in Early Childhood Education/CD

**Note: This percentage does not include HS graduates (n=216).*

With the exception of four-year degree holders, the majority of the SC ECE workforce received their education in ECE/Child Development. Workforce with four-year degrees had a somewhat even distribution among all the areas of specialization with the highest percentage in social work (42%).

Figure 2. Area of specialization reported in the SC ECE Workforce Study 2018



**Note: Percentages do not include HS graduates (n=216)*

Program Type

The entry-level qualification in the ECE field is set based on the type of child care program and the ECE position. Disaggregating the results on the education levels of the workforce allows us to identify ECE workforce who have higher levels of education than the required qualification. Public school 4K programs workers were more likely to have a graduate degree (40%), while group child care homes had the lowest percentage of workforce with a graduate degree. In contrast, family child care homes had the highest percentage of high school graduates (see Table 3 and Figure 3).

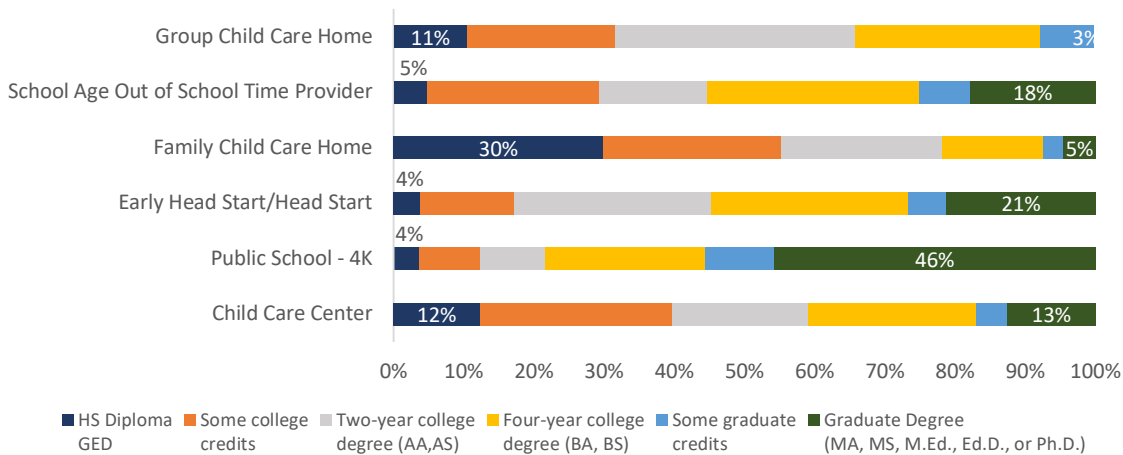
Table 3. Distribution of education levels of SC ECE workforce within program type (2018)

	Child Care Center	Public School - 4K	Early Head Start/Head Start	Family Child Care Home	School Age Out of School Time Provider	Group Child Care Home
HS Diploma GED	12%	3%	4%	30%	5%	11%
Some college credits	27%	8%	13%	25%	24%	21%
Two-year college degree (AA, AS)	20%	9%	28%	23%	16%	34%
Four-year college degree (BA, BS)	24%	23%	28%	14%	30%	26%
Some graduate credits	4%	10%	6%	3%	7%	5%
Graduate Degree (MA, MS, M.Ed., Ed.D., or Ph.D.)	13%	46%	21%	5%	18%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

30% of school-age workforce have a four-year degree

Note: Percentages indicate percent of respondents from each program type by their highest level of education. For example, 12% of respondents from Child Care Centers indicated their highest level of education was a HS Diploma or GED.

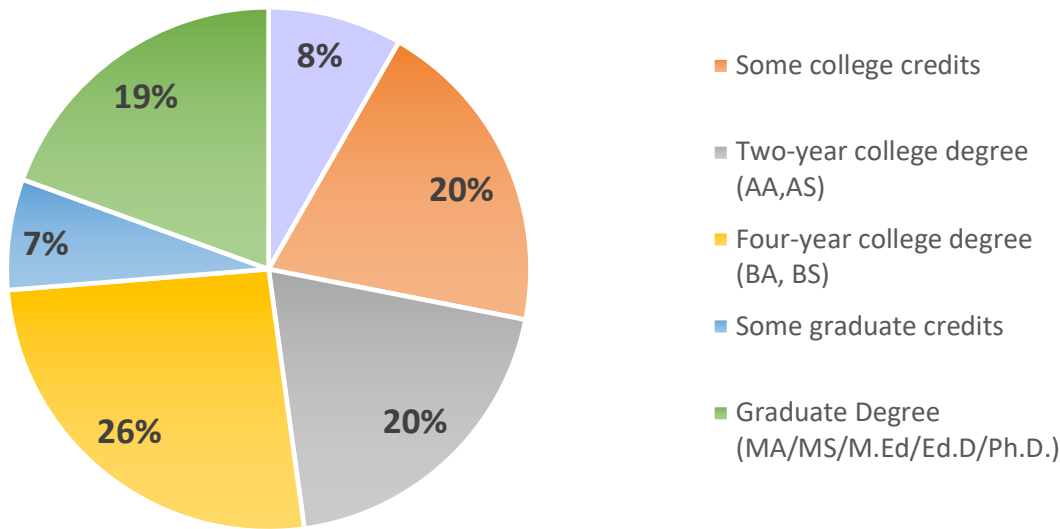
Figure 3. Distribution of education levels of SC ECE workforce within program type (2018)



Teacher Education Levels

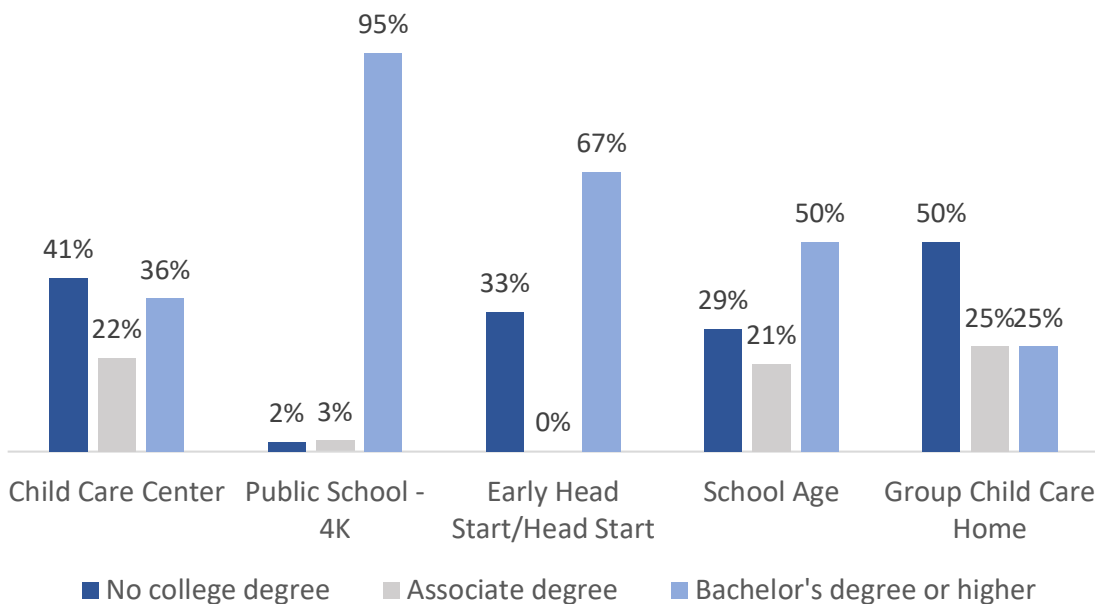
For the first time in SC, teachers, assistant teachers, and ECE workforce who held other positions within a child care facility were surveyed. Most of the teachers in the SC ECE workforce have a four-year college degree. As seen in Figure 4, there was a somewhat equal distribution of the teachers who had earned an associate degree (20%), some college credits (20%) and graduate level education (19%). The distribution of teachers with a bachelor's degree in public school was 95%.

Figure 4. Level of degree of SC ECE Workforce teachers in 2018



Note: The ECE position of teachers in this graph does not include assistant teachers.

The distribution of teachers with a bachelor's degree in public school was 95%

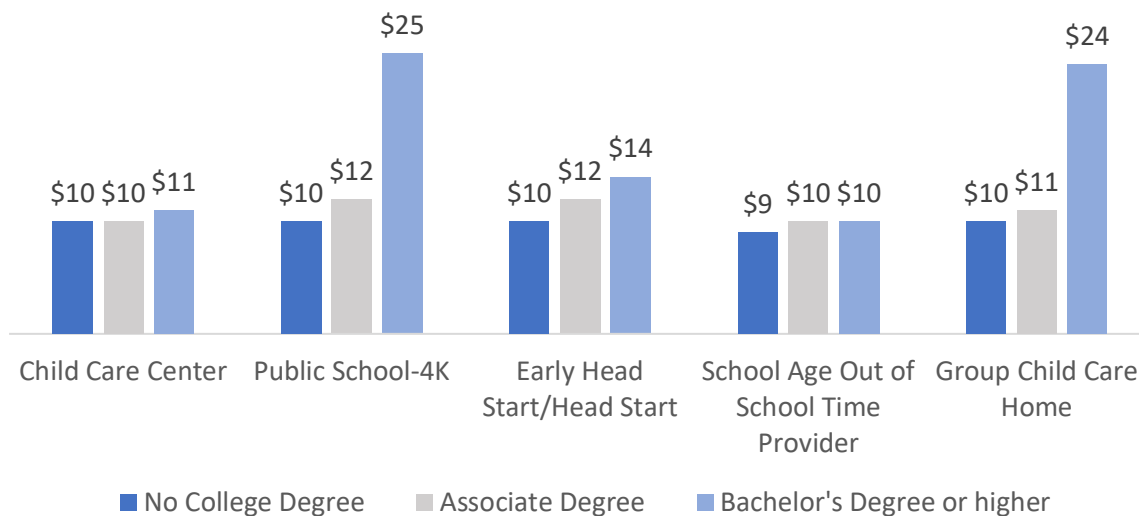


Note: Family child care was removed from this analysis because very few FCCH respondents identified themselves as teachers.

Wages

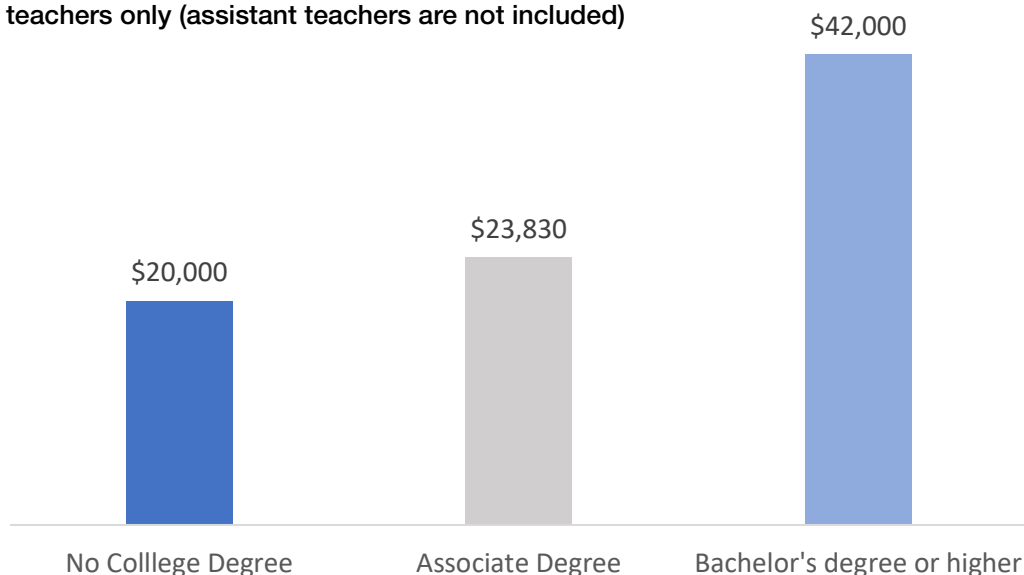
In early care and education programs, typical entry-level education for child care workers is a high school education, an associate’s degree for preschool teachers, and a bachelor’s degree for kindergarten and elementary school teachers (BLS, 2019). Education levels in ECE are closely tied to the type of program where the workforce is employed. However, a closer examination of teacher wages and their education levels indicate that some child care program types place a higher premium on more education that is reflected in the wages. For example, in child care centers where the minimal educational qualification is a high school degree, teachers earn very similar wages regardless of their education whereas in public school-4K programs, teachers with a bachelor’s degree earn more than twice their counterparts who do not have one (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5. Median wages by education level for teachers only (assistant teachers are not included)



Note: Family child care was removed from this analysis because very few FCCH respondents identified themselves as teachers.

Figure 6. Median salary by education level for teachers only (assistant teachers are not included)

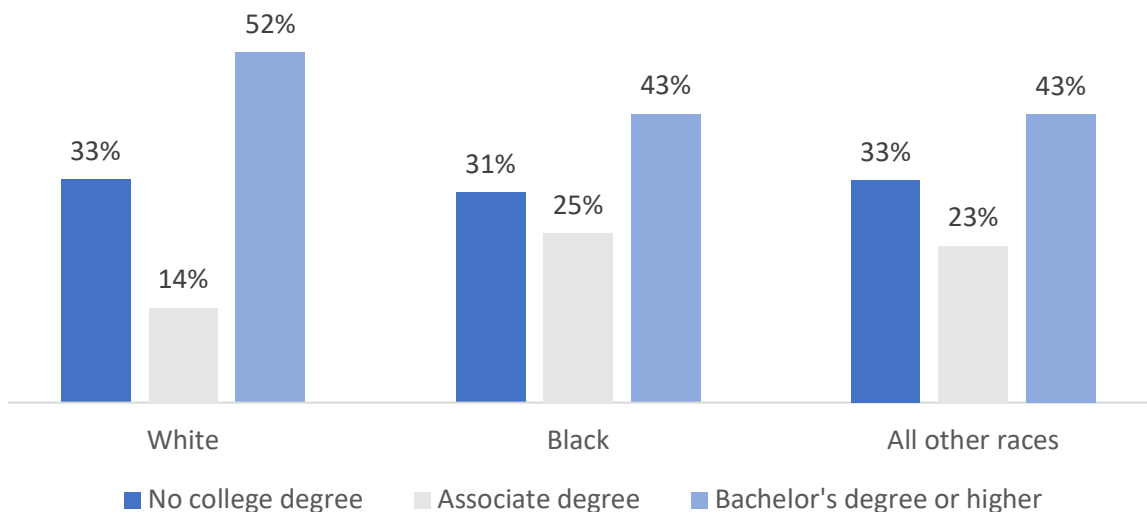


Race

Respondents who identified as Black/African American are over-represented in the ECE workforce, encompassing 39% of survey participants, while people who identify as Black/African American comprise 27% of the population in SC (US Census, 2019). The race identified by respondents was categorized into three levels – White, Black/African American, and Other, which includes workforce who identified themselves as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Educational achievement disaggregated by race revealed a slightly greater percentage of White and Other races (33%) workforce do not get a college degree compared with Black/African American workforce. A higher percentage of Black/African Americans reported their highest education as a 2-year college degree (25%) in comparison to White ECE workforce (14%), indicating a 11 percentage point difference (Figure 7). The reverse is true for ECE workforce in the bachelor's or higher category; a 11 percentage point difference indicated that White respondents were more likely to attend 4-year college than their peers who are Black/African American or other races.

Figure 7. Educational levels of SC ECE workforce in 2018



Discussion

Public investment in quality initiatives have largely focused on human capital development through subsidized college course offerings and professional development. Research indicates that better child outcome requires a combination of an improvement in work conditions and development of human capital (Whitebook, 2014). The data shows a diversity in educational levels that matches the diversity in child care with its wide array of setting, positions, educational requirements and population served. Programs and initiatives targeting ECE workforce, especially in professional development should address this diversity with a tailored approach. Data from the SC ECE Workforce Study 2018 presents several opportunities to address equity among the workforce in supporting a life-long learning path that will enhance the complex knowledge set and competencies required to care for and educate young children.

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