



# Sonoma County Early Childhood Education Workforce Survey Results Brief

## Introduction

The Sonoma County Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce Survey is the most comprehensive countywide effort to date to survey the ECE workforce. Designed to generate a profile of ECE providers in Sonoma County, the 2015 ECE Workforce Survey builds off of similar surveys conducted in 2006 and 2009. The 2015 survey asks about providers' background, experience, education, professional development, wages and benefits.

The survey is a collaborative effort of First 5 Sonoma County, the Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County, Community Child Care Council (4Cs), River to Coast Children's Services, Sonoma State University, and Santa Rosa Junior College. The collaborative hired Learning for Action (LFA), an independent research firm, to develop and conduct this community-wide survey of ECE providers in Sonoma County.

## Research Methods

The 2015 survey was developed in partnership with the collaborative. LFA administered the survey to all licensed family child care (FCC) homes and all licensed and license-exempt child care centers (Centers) in the County. The survey was administered to a total of 388 FCC homes and 228 Centers. Providers with email addresses received an online link to complete the survey, and providers with no listed email address received a paper survey. Periodic reminders were sent to online survey recipients, and an automated phone call reminder was sent to all registered providers. To increase the likelihood of response, the collaborative added an incentive for respondents who completed the survey after the survey had been out in the field for 5 weeks: the next 50 respondents were offered a \$10 Amazon gift card. The survey closed in September 2015 with a total response rate of 29% (113 of 388) for FCC owners and 23% (52 of 228) for Center Directors.

## How to Read this Report

The following sections of this report contain findings from the 2015, 2009, and 2006 Sonoma County ECE Workforce Survey efforts. Select findings from the 2006 and 2009 survey are incorporated as comparison data to the 2015 survey results. Results for Centers and FCCs are reported separately. Data from Center Directors are identified with a blue Center icon and data from FCC owners are identified with a yellow FCC icon:

### Legend



Child care center (Center) findings



Family child care home (FCC) findings

## Summary and Considerations for the Future

- Results suggest a need to recruit and incentivize ECE providers in the County. Wages have remained flat alongside rising living costs, making it difficult to attract and retain providers. Center Directors earn an average hourly wage (\$21.64/hour) comparable to the Sonoma County living wage (\$20.51/hour for a two-working-parent family)<sup>1</sup> but all other Center employees, FCC Owners and employees have hourly wages below or well below the living wage. As the current workforce ages and approaches retirement, it will become even more critical to strengthen recruitment efforts and advocate for increased compensation and benefits for providers. Both FCC Owners and Center Directors report that higher wages and better health benefits would motivate them and their staff to stay in the field.
- ECE providers in Sonoma County have made some gains in educational attainment since 2006 and 2009, particularly in ECE or child development degree attainment. This may be due, in part, to the support of CARES Plus, which began a degree-focused program in 2011, offering ECE providers financial and professional support to pursue higher education. While the percent of Center staff and FCC Owners holding a child development permit has increased over the years, the overall percentage of FCC Owners holding permits is still relatively low, at 32% for 2015.
- The majority of Center Directors are familiar with the new QIRS, but nearly half of FCC Owners have never heard of it. As the County works to implement a QIRS system, establishing new criteria and support for ECE quality improvement, staff may need to focus messaging and support among FCCs to ensure this large community of providers is set up to participate and meet quality standards.
- ECE program accreditation through the NAEYC or NAFCC is considered a national standard of child care quality, and Sonoma County 4Cs is now a registered Accreditation Facilitation Site, available to assist programs in the accreditation process. Yet, very few Centers and no FCCs are currently accredited, and many providers do not see the benefit of accreditation. These findings suggest there is a continued need to educate the provider and parent community about the value and benefits of accreditation.

## Employment

This section includes information on FCC and Center staffing, wages, and benefits.

### A. How many staff work at Centers and Family Child Care (FCC) facilities?



On average, child care agencies in the survey sample employ 10 staff. This is very similar to Center staffing in 2009, which also showed an average of 10 staff per agency.



15% of Center Director respondents indicated that they have another job outside the field of child care, the same as in 2009.



72% of FCCs represented in the survey are staffed by the respondents alone. 16% of FCC providers have one employee other than a spouse/partner, and only 12% have two or more employees. This is very similar to FCC staffing in 2009.<sup>2</sup>



The percent of FCC Owner respondents with another job outside of child care decreased from 12% in 2009 to 9% in 2015.

<sup>1</sup> The California Budget Project. December 2013. *Making Ends Meet: How Much Does it Cost to Raise a Family in California?* [http://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/131212\\_Making\\_Ends\\_Meet.pdf](http://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/131212_Making_Ends_Meet.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> In 2009, 72% of FCCs in the sample were staffed by the respondents alone, 18% of FCC providers had one employee other than a spouse/partner, and 11% had two or more employees.

## B. How much do ECE providers earn?



In 2015, Center Directors' average annual income remains similar to what it was in 2009, around \$35,001-\$40,000 per year (\$2,918-\$3,333 a month). (See Exhibit 1)

**On average, Center Directors' wages have remained flat while FCC Owners' wages have slightly increased since 2009.**

**Exhibit 1: Average weekly hours, hourly pay and annual income for Center employees**

	Average Hours Worked Per Week	Average Hourly Pay Rate	Average Annual Income <sup>3</sup>
Assistants	23.7 hours (n=15)	\$11.47/hr (n=17)	\$14,135
Teachers	31.2 hours (n=26)	\$14.39/hr (n=31)	\$23,346
Supervisors	34.0 hours (n=18)	\$18.71/hr (n=21)	\$33,079
Directors	32.7 (n=13)	\$21.64 /hr (n=14)	\$36,796



There has been a statistically significant increase ( $p < .01$ ) in the average income of FCC Owner respondents, from \$16,501-\$23,200 per year (\$1,376-\$1,933 a month) in 2009 to \$23,301-\$26,000 per year (\$1,934-\$2,167 a month) in 2015. Despite this increase, the average FCC Owner's income remains low, at less than half of the average annual salary in the County (\$55,491 in 2014).<sup>4</sup> (See Exhibit 2)

**Exhibit 2: Average weekly hours, hourly pay and annual income for FCC employees**

	Average Hours Worked Per Week	Average Hourly Pay Rate	Average Annual Income <sup>5</sup>
Employees	28.5 hours (n=26)	\$11.59/hr (n=22)	\$17,176
Owners	51.7 hours (n=38)	\$13.61/hr (n=18)	\$36,589

## C. What kinds of benefits are available to ECE providers?



83% of Center Director respondents provide benefits (including paid holidays, paid sick days, and health insurance) to their employees.

- Of these, 83% offer paid holidays and sick days, 79% offer paid vacation and 77% offer health insurance. Only 6% offer no benefits, a slight statistically significant increase from 2% in 2009 ( $p < .05$ ).



39% of FCC Owner respondents provide benefits (including paid holidays, paid vacation, and paid sick days) to their employees.

<sup>3</sup> Average annual income was estimated based on responses for average hourly wage and average hours worked per week.

<sup>4</sup> California Department of Transportation Economic Analysis Branch. *Sonoma County Economic Forecast 2014*.

[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/eab/socio\\_economic\\_files/2014/Sonoma.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/eab/socio_economic_files/2014/Sonoma.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- Since 2009, there have been statistically significant decreases in the percent of FCC Owners offering paid holidays (from 83% to 40% at  $p < .001$ ), paid vacation (from 69% to 29% at  $p < .01$ ), paid sick days (from 55% to 27% at  $p < .05$ ), and life insurance (from 10% to 0% at  $p < .05$ ).

## Experience and Commitment to the ECE Field

This section addresses providers' tenure and plans to remain in the field. Staff retention contributes to the quality of child care; children and families benefit from continuity of care and building trusting relationships with nurturing adults.

### A. How long have Sonoma County's providers been in the ECE field?



On average, Center Director respondents' tenure in the child care field has increased slightly. In 2015, 85% of Center Director respondents reported having worked in the ECE field for 11 years or more, compared to 81% in 2009, and 76% in 2006.



However, Center Directors' average length of time at their current jobs decreased from 6-10 years in 2009 to 4-5 years in 2015. This decrease is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).



67% of FCC Owner respondents have worked in the child care field for more than 10 years, compared to 50% in 2009. This increase was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).



FCC Owners average length of time at their current job also increased from 4-5 years in 2009 to 6-10 years in 2015. This increase was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

### B. How long does the current ECE workforce plan to stay in the field?



The percent of Center Directors planning to remain in the child care field for 6 years or more increased from 69% in 2009 to 87% in 2015. This increase was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).



The majority (93%) of Center Director respondents report that higher wages would motivate them and their staff to stay in the field. Half (50%) of respondents indicate that access to better health benefits would also incent them to stay in child care.



44% of FCC Owner respondents plan to remain in the field for at least 11 more years compared to 43% in 2009.



FCC Owner respondents indicate that the following incentives would motivate them to stay in the field: higher wages (50%), the ability to charge higher rates (45%), and access to better health benefits (41%).

## Workforce Capacity to Provide High Quality Care

This section includes information on ECE providers' credentials (including education and child development permits), and other professional development efforts. Provider quality is linked to educational attainment (degree attainment and coursework in ECE or child development) and other credentials like the child development permit.

### A. What are the credentials of the ECE workforce?

#### *Educational Attainment*



The percent of Center Director respondents with a college degree (including AA, BA, BS, and advanced degrees) remains high at 92% in 2015 (compared to 96% in 2009 and 76% in 2006).



The same is true for the percent of Center Director respondents with a four-year college degree, which increased slightly from 68% in 2009 to 69% in 2015, compared to only 56% in 2006.

- Center Director respondents report that 30% of Center employees have received a four-year degree or higher, compared to 34% in 2009 and 27% in 2006.



2015 FCC Owner respondents' educational attainment remains similar to what we saw in 2009; 44% of respondents in 2015 and 2009 reported holding a college degree (including AA, BA, BS, and advanced degrees). Between 2006 and 2015, the percent of FCC Owner respondents with a four-year college degree has remained between 24% and 27%.

### ***ECE and Child Development Training***



Center Director respondents' average level of ECE or child development training completed at a community college or four year college showed a statistically significant increase from 2009 to 2015 ( $p < .05$ ). In 2015, respondents averaged a BA/BS in ECE or child development compared to only an AA in 2009.

**Center Directors' average level of ECE or child development training increased from an AA in 2009 to a BA/BS in 2015. This increase was statistically significant.**



The percent of Center Director respondents holding an ECE degree (AA, BA, or BS) increased from 68% in 2009 to 73% in 2015.

- In 2015, Center Director respondents report that 27% of Center employees hold an Associates' degree or higher in ECE or child development, compared to 18% in 2009.



FCC Owner respondents' average level of ECE or child development training completed at a community college or four year college has increased from 6 units/credits of ECE or child development in 2009 to 12 units/credits of ECE or child development in 2015.

- FCC Owner respondents enroll in credit- or unit-bearing ECE or child development coursework through Santa Rosa Junior College (57%), workshops at professional association meetings or conferences (29%), and online classes (26%).



The percent of FCC Owner respondents holding an ECE degree (AA, BA, or BS) increased slightly from 13% in 2009 to 18% in 2015.

### ***Child Development Permits***



The percent of Center Director respondents holding a child development permit has increased substantially since 2006, when only 50% of Directors reporting holding a permit. In 2009, 55% of respondents held a permit, and in 2015, 73% of respondents reporting holding a permit.

**The percentage of providers with child development permits has increased substantially for both Center Directors and FCC Owners.**

- Center Directors report that 55% of employees hold a child development permit compared to only 36% in 2009.



Since 2009, the percent of Center Directors working towards moving up on the child development permit matrix has decreased slightly.

- In 2015, 21% of respondents had moved up on the matrix in the past three years compared to 30% in 2009.
- The percent of respondents with plans to move up to the next level on the matrix decreased from 41% in 2009 to 30% in 2015.



On average, FCC Owner respondents in 2009 and 2015 have heard of the child development permit matrix but have not used it. There has been a statistically significant increase ( $p < .01$ ) in the percentage of FCC Owner respondents holding a child development permit from 13% in 2006 to 32% in 2015.

- Of the FCC Owner respondents with child development permits, nearly half (49%) hold permits at the Associate Teacher level.
- Only 11% of FCC Owner respondents have moved up on the child development permit matrix in the past three years.



Nearly half (45%) of FCC Owner respondents report having plans to move up to the next level of the child development permit matrix and 31% had taken ECE or child development classes with the intention of moving up on the child development permit matrix.

- Open-ended responses indicate that many FCC Owners do not plan to move up on the permit matrix because they are not familiar with the matrix or don't have time to do so. Some respondents note that they are planning on retiring soon or don't have long-term plans to stay in child care.

## **B. To what extent are providers engaging in workforce quality improvement efforts?**



The percent of Center Directors who are members of a local, state, or national professional group has increased from 53% in 2009 to 67% in 2015.



There has been a slight decrease in the percent of Center Director respondents accessing supports or training related to children with special needs through workshops, training, or college classes—from 56% in 2009 to 47% in 2015.



The percent of Center Directors taking classes focused on language development and/or literacy has also decreased from 96% in 2009 to 82% in 2015. This change is statistically significant at  $p > .05$ .



Center Director respondents most commonly access support services from Early Learning Institute's Behavioral Consultation Project (92%), Santa Rosa Junior College's Child Development Department (89%), and First 5 Sonoma County Mini-Grants (81%).



Center Director respondents indicate that they hear about courses, workshops, or conferences in the child development field through the Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Sonoma County (83%), flyers (65%), and the Sonoma County Child Care Planning Council (55%).



There has been a slight decrease in the percent of FCC Owner respondents who are members of a local, state, or national professional group from 53% in 2009 to 47% in 2015.



There has been a slight increase in the percent of FCC Owners accessing supports or training related to children with special needs through workshops, training, or college classes. The percent of providers accessing special needs training through college classes increased from 14% in 2009 to 30% in 2015. This change was statistically significant at  $p < .01$ .



The percent of FCC Owners taking classes focused on language development and/or literacy has increased from 36% in 2009 to 47% in 2015.



FCC Owner respondents most commonly access the following community resources: 4Cs Food Program (81%), 4Cs Resource and Referral (75%), and local libraries (56%).



The most popular source of information for courses, workshops, or conferences in the child development field is the Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Sonoma County; 88% of FCC Owner respondents report that they hear about opportunities for professional development from 4Cs. FCC Owner respondents also hear about child development courses, workshops or conferences from the college schedule of classes (45%), and flyers (38%).

## ECE Program Quality

This section includes information on ECE program quality, including accreditation, familiarity with the Quality Improvement Rating System (QIRS), and program quality improvement efforts. A QIRS rates ECE programs using consistent criteria and provides ongoing support to help ECE programs improve their quality. Sonoma County is in the process of developing a local QIRS, known as Quality Counts.

### A. What are the credentials of Sonoma County ECE programs?

#### Accreditation



6% of the Centers represented in the 2015 survey sample are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

- In open-ended responses, Center Director respondents indicate that they do not seek accreditation or re-accreditation because of the time and cost involved. Some respondents also note that they do not see the need for accreditation.



None of the FCCs in the sample are accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). 4% report that they have been accredited in the past but are not currently accredited.

- In open-ended responses, many FCC Owner respondents indicate that they are unsure of what accreditation means or what it entails.

#### Quality Improvement Rating System (QIRS)



Center Director respondents are still getting comfortable with the Quality Improvement Rating System (QIRS). 11% of Center Director respondents have not heard of the QIRS, 81% are familiar with the QIRS, and 9% reported that they could teach another provider about the QIRS.



44% of FCC Owner respondents have never heard of the QIRS, and only 4% of respondents are comfortable using it or could teach another provider about it.

### B. To what extent are providers engaging in program quality improvement efforts?

#### Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)



65% of Center Director respondents have had their child care Centers assessed using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Of those, 84% used an outside external assessor.



22% of FCC Owner respondents have had their FCC assessed using CLASS. Of those, 26% were completed by an external assessor.

### **Environment Rating Scales (ERS)**



77% of Center Director respondents have had their child care environments assessed using the applicable Environment Rating Scale (ERS). More than half (54%) of these assessments were completed by an outside external assessor, and nearly one-third (32%) involved both program self-assessment and an outside external assessor.

- Of the 23 respondents who have had multiple ERS assessments, 91% showed increases in scores.



39% of FCCs in the sample have been assessed using the applicable ERS. Of those, 43% involved both program self-assessment and an external assessment, 36% were program self-assessment, and 21% were completed by an external assessor.

- Of the 27 FCC Owner respondents who have had multiple ERS assessments, 70% showed increases in scores.