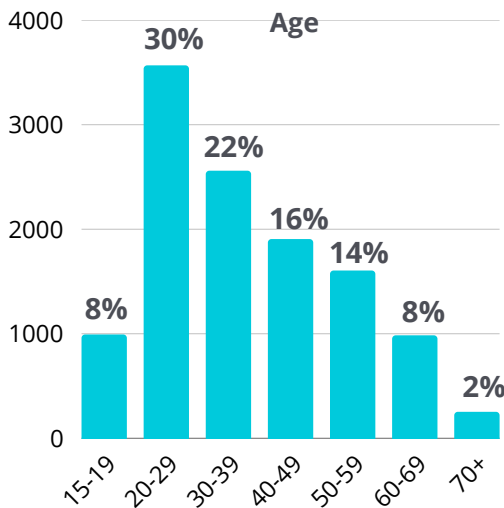


# Maine's Child Care Workforce

## CHILD CARE EDUCATORS ARE THE "WORKFORCE BEHIND THE WORKFORCE."

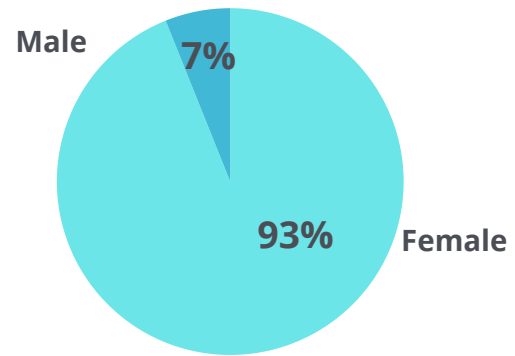
There are estimated to be ~**7,500** early childhood educators working across Maine. Their care sets the stage for kindergarten readiness and allows parents and caregivers to work.

**60% of child care educators are younger than 40.** Over one third is younger than 30.



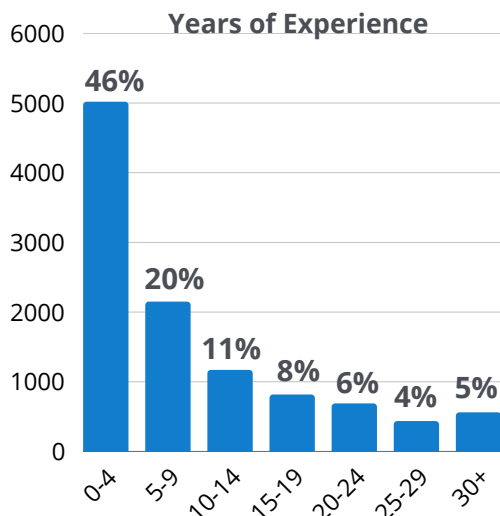
**93% of early educators are women.**  
**93% of early educators are white.**

3% identify as Black/African American, 2% as Hispanic, 1% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1% as Asian.



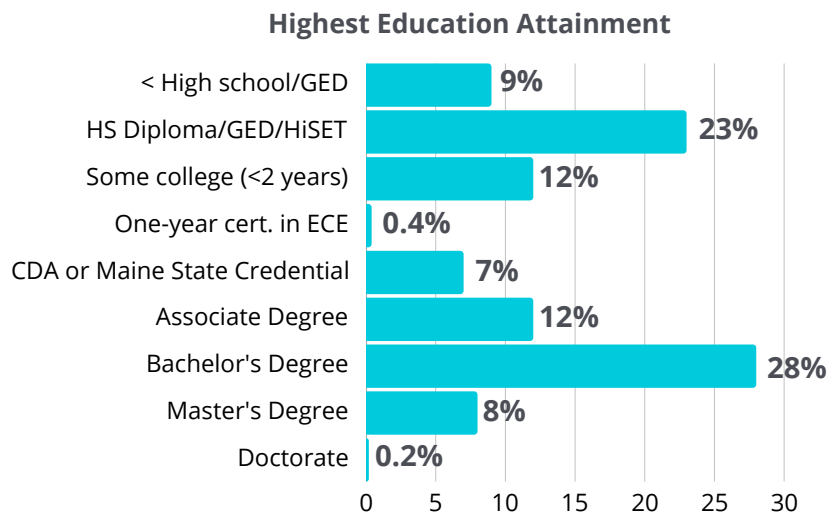
**46% of child care educators have under 5 years of experience.**

Two-thirds have less than 10 years of experience in the field.



**48% of child care educators have an Associate degree or higher.**

36% have a Bachelor's degree or higher, comparable to statewide trends.

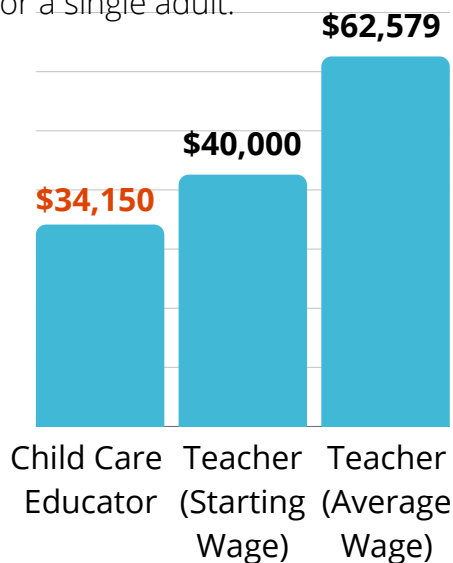


# Maine's Child Care Workforce

## CHILD CARE EDUCATORS FACE PERSISTENTLY LOW WAGES DUE TO CHRONIC UNDERINVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

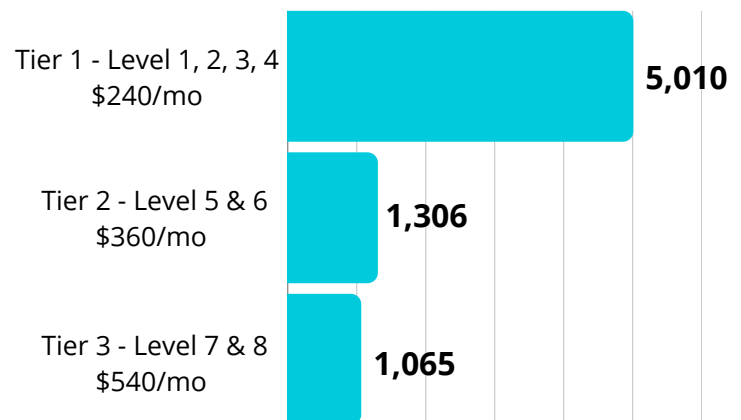
Maine has made strides in acknowledging the value of child care educators, however, progress is tenuous. Proposed budget cuts threaten an already unstable field.

The mean annual wage of a child care educator in Maine is **\$34,150 (\$16.41/hour)** with the wage supplement. Even with the wage supplement, this is considered below living wage for a single adult.



**7,381** people, on average, have received monthly wage supplements in 2024.

The proposed budget plans to rollback a significant portion of these monthly wage supplements to our child care educators.



Note: Wage Supplements are tied to MRTQ Career Lattices. Level descriptions can be found [here](https://www.mrtq.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MRTQ_Lattices.pdf): [https://www.mrtq.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MRTQ\\_Lattices.pdf](https://www.mrtq.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MRTQ_Lattices.pdf)

### Takeaways

- **Child care is the workforce behind every other workforce in Maine.** Additionally, child care is a meaningful, intensive occupation that provides tremendous benefit to families, businesses, and communities. Wages are not commensurate with the value our early educators provide.
- Given the long hours and low wages (average \$16.41/hr) in the field, Maine's child care educator workforce is relatively **young and inexperienced**. Low pay and benefits prevents the profession from being viewed as a viable career.
- There is significant turnover in the field, however, specific figures are hard to come by. **Maine's Department of Health and Human Services does not collect data on child care worker turnover.**
- Child care educators are paid in the bottom three percent of all U.S. occupations.