



Mary Pauper: A Historical Exploration of Early Care and Education Compensation, Policy, and Solutions

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September 2021

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to the creation of these resources

Child **TRENDS**

Acknowledgements

The project team would like to acknowledge the many people who made this project and these reports possible, and those who inspired the work including:

- The early care and education workforce, who nurture and care for our nation's children every day
- The people who have advocated for respect of and fair compensation for the early care and education field
- The leaders and policy makers pushing for pay parity for the early care and education workforce

In addition, we would like to extend special thanks to those who were instrumental in guiding the conceptualization, design, and development of these reports. They include:

- Kristine Andrews, Porsche Boddicker-Young, Yolanda Deane, Brent Franklin, Iheoma Iruka, Elizabeth Jordan, Doré LaForett, Olga Morales, Catherine Nichols, Catherine Schaefer, Mindy Scott, and Mark Waits
- We would also like to thank Julie Porcelli who worked to get the contracts executed quickly

Importantly, we have updated the report as of April 4, 2022. We have clarified language related to Native American populations in this report that did not clearly represent this population's perspectives on specific legislation, policies, or historical events; or fully define its diversity. For example, we have edited language to acknowledge that colonization of Native American communities is still happening. We have also made other edits to recognize that Native American is a political identity and individuals who identify as Native American may also identify as other racial and ethnic groups. Finally, we made the text clearer to indicate we are referencing federal laws that affect Native American people vs. laws that derive from the authority of sovereign Tribal Nations. We are incredibly grateful for the sharp eyes of Deana Around Him and Heather Sauyag Jean Gordon for calling our attention to the need for these edits. We also would like to specifically call out the time Heather spent with our team sharing additional resources, as well as her perspective and knowledge to ensure the research presented on Native American people in this paper was not whitewashed. As is often said, the person who controls the narrative, controls the story. Thank you, Heather, for helping us to tell the story with greater accuracy.

Finally, these reports would not have been possible without the funding and flexibility from the Early Educator Investment Collaborative. Ola Friday, our project officer, was a true partner and gave us the trust and empowerment we needed to move this work forward, and the Collaborative Steering committee gave us much food for thought which strengthened the papers. For the feedback and opportunity, we will remain forever grateful.



Suggested Citation: Lloyd, C.M., Carlson, J., Barnett, H., Shaw, S., & Logan, D. (2021). *Mary Pauper: A historical exploration of early care and education compensation, policy, and solutions*. Child Trends.

A Note from Chrishana

This rapid turnaround commissioned paper (completed by a small team in about 4 months) covers the timeframe from the genocide and relocation of Indigenous people and the enslavement of people with Black African heritage in the United States, up through present day. The goal—to examine the ways in which systemic racism within the U.S. has impacted early care and education policy and practice, with a specific focus on compensation and preparation of the early care and education workforce—was certainly not a trivial one. Our work required significant time, reading, intellectual debate, reflection, and emotional labor, all while team members were working on other projects and handling the business of life more generally (babies born, family members being sick, and unplanned school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, among other things). The fact that this paper was completed in such a short time frame, and with such rigor is truly a testament to the commitment and skill of my co-authors, who worked many unconventional hours and gave much of their time freely to ensure the work was high-quality and useful to the field.

As our team reflected on this work among ourselves, and with others, it became very apparent that the emphasis of the writing, and the story that has emerged in this work is inextricably bound in the history of our country, particularly the institution of chattel slavery. The labor of Black people has been used to jumpstart, bolster, and maintain the economic advancement of the country for centuries. For Black women in particular, forced relegation to domestic work, caretaking, and child care (both during and after slavery), has strengthened the country's economy, advanced the lives of White people (including White women), and severely constrained the economic positioning of Black people. It has also resulted in a long standing and intractable phenomenon of child care being associated with Black women. As such, domestic and care work, particularly child care, has been and continues to be a profession that like Black women, is viewed negatively and disrespected. As a result, the child care field is rife with racialized and gendered economic discrimination and exploitation.

As the demographics of the country shift, so have the faces of the caretakers of American's children. To date, Black women continue to be represented in high numbers in the domestic service, caretaking, and child care spheres (their numbers have remained fairly constant since emancipation). Over time, however, they have also been joined by certain groups of Hispanic and Asian American women. While *Mary Pauper* is largely, and necessarily a "Black story", our take on the research gives us no doubt that the poor wages that child care professionals of every race receive, is a direct result of the devaluing of child care that is rooted in the history of slavery and the country's perceptions of Black women. The by-product of these perceptions is the reinforcement of racist and sexist policies and practices. In other words, **the negative opinions and treatment of Black women in the child care field has shaped the broader child care workforce and impacts all early care and education professionals (to varying levels) today.** As we continue to work toward a future when this is not the reality, we are also excited about conversations with others who are interested in and seek to expand this paper to conduct more in-depth examinations of the experiences of Native American women, in addition to deliberately exploring the experiences of Hispanic and Asian American women.

The work continues.

Chrishana

Historical Antecedents of Systemic Racism and Other Forms of Oppression on the Early Care and Education Workforce

A Landscape Scan



Introduction

High-quality early care and education (ECE) is critically important to the U.S. economy. It supports children’s physical, emotional, and cognitive development; enables parent and caretaker participation in education, training, and employment; and contributes to the country’s economic productivity.¹ Over the last several years, increasing attention has been given to the need for structural reforms to the ECE system, including the way in which ECE professionals^a are compensated. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these conversations.

The issue of ECE workforce compensation has been covered extensively in the literature. Research consistently shows that ECE professionals are underpaid and have less access to employee benefits than others with comparable education and skills.^{2,3,4} A Brookings study of earnings by college major found that in comparison to other college majors, a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education yields the lowest lifetime pay.⁵ Other research digs deeper into this issue by shedding light on wage differences within the ECE field. This work has found that the age of children cared for and the type of setting in which one works affects wages. For instance, individuals who care for infants and toddlers make less than those who care for older children^{6,7}; home-based child care (HBCC) professionals make less than those working in center-based child care; and community, center-based early care and education professionals make less than individuals caring for young children in public school settings.⁸

Differences in compensation are also racialized^b with Black and Hispanic ECE professionals being especially poorly paid.⁹ Black professionals earn approximately 84 cents for every dollar earned by their White counterparts.^{10,c} These wage gaps are not related to characteristics like the age of children, setting type, or education level. For instance, Black women who work with infants and toddlers earn on average \$0.77 less per hour than other infant-toddler professionals, and the gap increases to \$1.71 when examining preschool aged children.¹¹ Irrespective of race, low wages coupled with a lack of access to employer benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement savings, paid

Definitions

Early care and education includes settings where infants, toddlers, and young children are cared for and taught by adults other than their parents or primary caregivers with whom they reside. Home visiting programs, where individuals work with parents/caretakers while their children are present, is not considered part of the ECE system for the purpose of these papers.

Compensation includes salary, wages, and other benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement savings, paid sick leave, or paid vacation time or supports such as training or professional development) offered by employers.

Center-based child care facilities are operated in commercial spaces and can be privately or publicly funded. Center-based child care facilities tend to be larger and serve more children than home-based child care facilities.

Home-based child care facilities are operated in residential areas out of a private home. Home-based childcare providers are funded by monies from caretakers/ parents and like center-based child care, also have the option of receiving public dollars if they meet certain criteria. Home-based child care facilities are typically smaller, have less staff and serve fewer children than center-based facilities.

^a Across these resources we refer to early care and education staff collectively as ECE professionals, the ECE workforce or early educators. Other terminology—child care workers, center-based providers, and home-based providers, for example—is used when citing research or data that use these particular terms or titles. Unless specifically noted, references to the ECE professionals, the workforce or early educators excludes center-based or ECE program leadership, such as directors, administrators, and principals.

^b This paper uses the identifiers Native American, Black, and Hispanic to refer to people who respectively trace their roots to America pre-colonization, Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Spain. We understand, however, that preferences vary and there are ongoing debates regarding the use of ethnic descriptors for populations highlighted in these resources.

^c While this paper is unable to provide specific information on the compensation of Native American women in ECE specifically, data from the general population show these women are paid about 60 cents to every dollar paid to a White, non-Hispanic man.

sick leave, or paid vacation time) has resulted in pay rates so low that many in the ECE field are using public assistance programs¹² to make ends meet and have limited monies available for retirement.¹³

These disparities highlight the need to better understand ECE compensation issues using an equity lens. More specifically, compensation issues cannot be understood without examining the ways in which three dominant themes—race, gender, and class—have fundamentally shaped perceptions of child-rearing more generally, which in turn has affected the laws and policies related to ECE compensation.

This landscape scan focuses on five timeframes—1400-1619; 1619-1870s; 1870s-1940s; 1945-1970s; 1970s-2020s^d—to explore ways in which our country’s history has impacted ECE policy. We pay specific attention to issues related to compensation, which also link to ECE preparation and workforce stability. This landscape scan complements the work of other scholars, including seminal work by Marcy Whitebook (2001)¹⁴, who conducted an extensive review of the economic and policy climate, key players and strategies, and the successes and challenges of the ECE compensation movement from 1970-2001. We expand on her work, by including timeframes before 1970 and after 2001. These additions help to highlight the ways in which historical factors and prevailing ideologies played key roles in devaluing child care, and, by extension, the compensation of ECE professionals from the country’s inception. We also use an equity lens to examine these time frames paying particular attention to race and gender to explain how racism, sexism, and oppression is codified in U.S. policies in ways that devalue the ECE workforce and affect their compensation. Following our historical overview, we provide a high-level synthesis of the findings and conclude with key themes that inform the content and recommendations in the companion white paper.

This landscape scan sets the stage for the accompanying white paper that highlights existing policy and program solutions and offers recommendations for centering racial equity in conversations about ECE compensation, preparation, and stability for policymakers, practitioners, and philanthropists. Across the documents, our work also calls out and proposes solutions to the harmful effects of prior policies (or the lack thereof) that have negatively affected the ability of the ECE workforce to earn living wages. The information and insights shared in both resources is critical to developing infrastructure and policies that support economic stability for the ECE workforce.

A Note on Intersectionality

Throughout these resources, we review and attend to the ways in which history has shaped the experiences of Black and Native American people in the U.S., particularly women. Race and gender, however, are just two facets of one’s identity. We understand the ECE workforce is complex and that ECE professionals have a multitude of identities, experiences, and characteristics that impact their existence including sex, gender, economic status, wealth, class, race, ethnicity, nativity, language use, ability status, and others. We focus primarily on the intersection of racism and sexism in this work (particularly as they impact Black and Native American women) given the history of attempted eradication, displacement, subjugation, and oppression of these individuals and the devastating and reverberating effects these activities have had. We also recognize the ways in which this much needed approach may limit the implications of our work.

^d While necessary to establish the bounds of the work, we understand that the timeframes chosen for this review are not cut and dry. For example, colonization of Native American people in the United States, defined in this paper as 1400-1619, continues to occur.

Methods

This targeted landscape scan reviews, identifies, and summarizes research and other literature relevant to the history of structural racism and other forms of institutional oppression in the field of ECE. The scan was completed to better inform the Early Education Investment Collaborative's (the Collaborative) understanding about how these systemic inequities have affected the compensation of the ECE workforce. Our scan focused on the history of the U.S. from ~1400's to date, highlighting key events such as the genocide and relocation of American Indians and the period of enslavement of Black individuals with African heritage in the U.S. and its aftereffects (i.e., policies of de facto and de jure racism/oppression). These occurrences and others are used to benchmark, shed light on, and interpret issues relevant to the country's perceptions of the ECE workforce and the way these perceptions have affected the compensation of ECE professionals.

To complete this scan, our team identified topics and key words based on our knowledge of the field, initial discussions with the Collaborative and internal and external consultations with ECE experts. Key words and phrases included but were not limited to: "child care and feminism," "child care history in the United States," "child care and women of color," "civil rights laws," "compensation," "domestic workers," "domestic workers policies," "domestic workers rights," "early care and education compensation," "early care and education professionalism," "early care and education training and/or professional development," "early care and education shortages," "labor market discrimination," "racial wealth gaps," "racism and feminism," "racism and compensation," "Tribal early childhood education," "Tribal sovereignty in education," "teacher shortages" and others. We combined key words and used Boolean operators, "and," "or," and, when relevant, "not" to expand and narrow our results. We completed key word and phrase searches primarily using ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest to identify relevant peer reviewed/academic literature. We also used Google to conduct website searches of advocacy, education, policy, think tank, trade association, union, and other organizations, and drew on our team's own scholarship to identify relevant gray literature (i.e., book chapters, policy briefs, and reports), journalism pieces (i.e., blog posts, magazine and newspaper articles, op-eds, podcasts, and videos), and projects that could inform this work. We scanned reference lists of papers we reviewed and then included the papers in the scan to identify and search for articles that cited those papers. Given the resources and time constraints of the project, we prioritized literature that had an "intersectional focus," meaning the literature or resources included key words but was also written from a 1) racial equity lens, or 2) a feminist or womanist lens. We also sought to limit our searches to papers and resources published within the past 10 years, although many exceptions were made to this rule.

Describing Native American People and their Status

When referring to Native American people in these papers, we are specifically referencing Indigenous people who existed prior to colonization by European, Russian, and other settlers in what is now the U.S. 50 states and U.S. territories.

As preferences vary in the descriptive terms to use for Indigenous people, we are using census terminology: American Indian is the term for Indigenous people in the continental 48 states, Alaska Native for Indigenous people in Alaska, Native Hawaiian for Indigenous people in Hawaii, and Other Pacific Islanders for Indigenous people in the U.S. Pacific Island territories.

The term Native American Tribal Nations is used to reference the uniquely different sovereign Tribal Nations. Importantly, the U.S. federal government and state governments do not recognize the sovereignty of all Native American Tribal Nations which has implications for policy and funding. Currently 574 Tribes are recognized by the federal government (*Federally Recognized Tribes List Act of 1994*, Pub. L. 103-454, 25 U.S.C. § 479a (1994)).

We checked with our internal project consultants and incorporated their perspectives and feedback into the decisions about what literature to review in more depth. Selected literature was reviewed and tabled using Excel. The process included assigning every article to at least one of the following categories: *Overarching Historical Context*, which focused on historical events and policies particularly around race, class, gender, and economics; *Early Care and Education Context*, which focused on the history of child care/early care and education in the U.S. and the state of the field throughout various periods of time; *Policies and Practices*, which focused on policies, best practices, and recommendations for ways to support the ECE workforce and access to high-quality child care; and *Other*, a “catch-all” category.

Tabling consisted of identifying the key information in the resources, such as author(s), year published, type of source, methodology, focal population, use of race equity or womanist/feminist lenses, and inclusion of Native American Tribal Nations. We also summarized key findings and themes for each source along with findings related to child outcomes; compensation, wages, or benefits; credentials or higher education; policies mentioned; and policy solutions provided. In total, our team reviewed more than 200 articles and books in addition to gray literature and other resources.

An important caveat to note is that we encountered literature and data limitations when conducting the landscape scan and writing the white paper that constrained our ability to make firm linkages between ECE compensation and Hispanic and Native American populations, including American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander people. While additional resources and time would have been helpful in this regard (for example, exploration of immigration and domestic worker literature and policy to gain more insight into compensation issues for immigrants such as Hispanic women), issues regarding data, limited sample sizes, and the invisibility of certain populations has been well documented.^{15,16,17,18,19}

Historical Overview of Race and Gender in the United States As They Relate to Early Care and Education and Compensation

Introduction

In this section we use specific periods in U.S. history to present relevant contextual events, factors, and prevailing ideologies, emphasizing race, gender, and in some cases, class, that in turn influenced the perception and creation of policies and laws tied to ECE, the ECE workforce, and workforce compensation. We also highlight and summarize select policies within each time frame and conclude each subsection with a summary of key learnings and takeaways.

~1400-1619: Colonizing America

Section Overview

Over this 200+ year period, American Indians in what is now the continental United States had their land forcefully stolen by White European settlers; Africans were beginning to be brought to America against their will to be enslaved; and White European women were transported to America to marry, bear children, and run households for White male European settlers. This time period began to solidify the role of women, and Black women in particular, as domestic workers responsible for child care and household management.

Historical Context, Policies, and Laws

For millenia, what is currently known as the continental United States has been home to American Indian people. Around the 1400s, however, the continent was invaded by White men from Europe (White women would not come to America in significant numbers until the early 1620s).²⁰ This settler colonialism resulted in significant changes to the way of life for American Indian people, including the theft and loss of the lands on which they lived and subsisted, genocide, exposure to fatal diseases, enslavement, and laws that made their cultural and religious practices illegal.^{21,22}

Acquisition and control of land and the desire to extract its resources were two fundamental and closely related issues undergirding the invasion and colonization of American Indian land and people by White Europeans.²³ These goals of the White settlers had a key role in shaping the history and present lives of Native American people, and later, other races of people in the United States, including Black and Hispanic people.²⁴ For instance, Native American people in the 1400s (and currently) had/have a relational approach to land (some of it sacred²⁵), viewing it as a sustainable resource and gift that fostered, among other things, identity and ancestral connection.^{26,27} Europeans, on the other hand, viewed land as a private possession—something that should be bought, sold, controlled by individuals or entities, and demarcated by fields, fences, or other barriers.²⁸

With some exceptions, American Indians resisted colonization and the efforts of European people to steal and control their land by fighting or negotiating.²⁹ They were often unsuccessful, however, because of the introduction of diseases like smallpox and their lack of guns and bullets, which Europeans brought to the Americas in abundance.³⁰ As greater numbers of Europeans arrived on the continent, initiated wars, and expanded their settlements, American Indian people became outnumbered, and their communities and Tribal Nations were moved, combined, and destroyed.

While the continued expansion of settlers onto American Indian land and the genocide and removal of American Indian people was happening, the first recorded Black Africans, arrived in America in 1619. These individuals were unwillingly imprisoned and violently taken from their homeland, for the sole purpose of serving White colonizers.³¹ About a year later, their arrival was formally recorded for the Virginia colony census—17 female and 15 male Africans (American Indians were recorded separately in the census).³² Laws related to the enslavement of people would not be passed until about 25 years later, but



Image Credit: Smith, J. & Hole, W. (1624) *Virginia*. [London] [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99446115/>.

being of African descent/Black was a critical facet of slavery and incentives to expand the enslavement of Black people into the institution were many. Key was a desire for money. European men's travel to America was predicated on obtaining resources not just for survival, but for profit. For American Indians this included genocide, rape, enslavement, and the forcible taking of their land. For Black Africans, kidnapping/holding them hostage from their homeland, enslaving them, raping and impregnating African women, taking away African people's cultural traditions, mores, and folkways, and selling African people and their children for profit became a way to accomplish this goal.

Realizing this goal also required women. Long-term economic growth could not occur if the population of settlers was primarily men. Reproduction was necessary, and neither American Indian or Black women were deemed to be suitable partners for White men.³³ The eventual solution, paying for White women to come to America to marry White male settlers, was successful.³⁴ The role of women varied based on geography and ethnicity, but generally was shaped by Christian religious teachings. Women ran the households, which included activities such as cooking, cleaning, making clothes, and child rearing.³⁵ Despite their many responsibilities, women were expected to be subservient to men—first to their fathers and then to their husbands as they married. Most learned to read, so they could teach children about Christianity and to abide by the Bible. Few, however, were taught to write, because it was thought that writing was an unnecessary skill for women to have.³⁶

Key Takeaways

A fundamental issue central to the period of colonization was the desire of European men to generate income and acquire wealth. To do so, required land and workers. These issues played important roles in the treatment and eventual development of policies related to Native American people, Black people, and White women. During the period of colonization, however, there were generally few formal laws related to land, labor, or the treatment of American Indian people, Black people, or White women. When laws were drafted, they tended to reflect religious beliefs: for example, obedience to those in power.³⁷ Eventually, **treaties were developed to acquire and take land from American Indians**, and **slavery was codified into legal statute** making it a race-based, lifelong, and hereditary condition for Black people. In addition, under most conditions **White women had few rights and were not allowed to own land or other goods** (unless their husbands died), earn money, write, or otherwise engage in activities that could facilitate any independence. They did, however, have privileges and access to resources and power that American Indian and Black woman did not. These occurrences—the genocide and theft of land and other goods from American Indians, the enslavement of Africans, the subordination of White women, and the perceived secondary status of all these groups by White men—were driven by the desire for money and wealth building, laying the foundation for the future of the country.

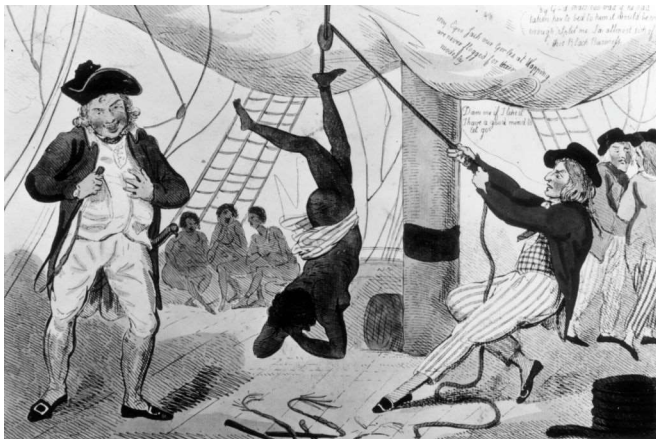
~1619-1870s: Slavery and Its End, Continued Colonization, and Early Reconstruction

Section Overview

This section will provide an overview of the roles of Black and White women during slavery. It will also shed light on the fight for civil rights by women, paying particular attention to different perceptions and resulting tensions that developed between White and Black women while engaged in the struggle for equal rights. We also review ways in which the U.S. government created and implemented formal policies to remove American Indian people from their lands resulting in significant losses and death. This phase in the country's history highlights how differences in economic security between women of different races emerged and remain in place today.



Historical Context, Policies, and Laws



The system of slavery grew in tandem with the expansion of American colonies, as Africans continued to be brought to America for servitude. Regardless of location, enslaved Black men and women had difficult lives. The American economy (particularly in the South) heavily depended on the enslavement of Black people, resulting in slaveholders^e having unchecked power over those they owned.³⁸ Enslaved people were most often engaged in agricultural work on farms and plantations raising crops like tobacco, cotton, corn, and rice.³⁹

Depending on the plantation and crop, the type of labor conducted by men and women differed, but in general, females who were enslaved worked about 12-16 hours a day in “field” and “house” labor.⁴⁰ They were also expected to support the continuation of the system of slavery (including its profits) by bearing children.⁴¹ Like White women during the colonial period, Black enslaved women did domestic work when they were in the “house.” Maid activities, cooking, cleaning, sewing, and rearing their slave master's children (including nursing them, depending on the child's age) were key responsibilities.⁴² Rape by slave masters was also common.⁴³ To be a house slave was a comparatively “privileged” status. They did not have to work outdoors in harsh conditions and typically had access to better clothes, food, and shelter. They were also closer to White people, which provided them with access to information and knowledge.⁴⁴ Mixed-race Black people were often preferred as house slaves, sometimes because they were the slave master's offspring.⁴⁵ Laws regarding these offspring were created to keep Black people enslaved. For example, in 1662 Virginia passed a law, *partus sequitur*

^e Contrary to popular belief, slaveowners included both White men and women despite the secondary status of women and their primary role as homemakers.

ventrem, based on a derivative of English law that stated a child's status as an enslaved person (or not) was predicated on the mother's status. This law, enabled White men to rape enslaved women and father children without responsibility for their emotional, physical, or economic well-being.⁴⁶

Colonization and slavery have played a key role in the way that Native American, Black, and White women^{47,48,49} were (and are currently) conceptualized⁵⁰ and treated by White people. Research about American Indian women's history during colonization indicates variation in women's experiences and roles. In general, pre-colonization, American Indian daily life was communal with differing contributions by men and women being valued equally.⁵¹ Post colonization, interactions between White people and American Indian women were superficial in nature. Like Black women, sometimes American Indian women were the victims of sexual assault and rape by White men.⁵² More generally, American Indian people were used by White settlers and their knowledge of the land exploited to facilitate settler survival.⁵³ White settlers also perceived American Indians as barbaric, unable to manage their own affairs, and godless, in need of conversion to Christianity.^{54,55,56,57}



In a similar manner, enslaved Black people were viewed as mentally inferior, unevolved, and animalistic by White people. Many Black women were viewed as Mammy's—dark-skinned, obese, asexual, matronly, kerchief-wearing women—content to serve White families, or as Jezebels—most often light-skinned, slender, mixed-race women with straight hair and White phenotypical features who lusted after and tempted White males.^{58,59}

In contrast to these depictions of American Indian and Black women, depictions of White women emphasized purity and chastity. They were also elevated in their roles as wives and mothers and were expected to supervise household slave laborers. Absent the role of White women's oversight of primarily enslaved Black women in their homes (Black men rarely worked inside), they were expected to have little agency and were instead thought to be individuals who needed to be taken care of by White men.^{60,61} The stereotypes of each group of women were inaccurate, but they helped to rationalize the poor treatment of American Indian and Black women during and after colonialization and slavery, and encouraged the exaltation and to some degree, restricted power of White women.

Drawing on interviews with formerly enslaved people from the Federal Writers project, historian Stephanie Jones-Rogers reveals the stereotypical portrayals of White women as having little agency were untrue. Her research shows that White women were not passive bystanders relegated to the home during slavery, but instead found that, like White men, White women were active participants in the *business* of slavery, including owning slaves (most often females and babies) themselves.⁶² Many times, these enslaved people were gifted to them when they were young.

Legal doctrines called **covertures** were used to ensure that any assets White women had before marriage—property, wages, or monies became her husband's once married. To protect these assets, parents and others encouraged women to get **marriage settlements**, legal documents similar to prenuptial agreements to articulate what level of control husbands could have over their property. This active gifting, buying, asset protection, and investment in slavery, meant White women not only benefitted from Black women's immediate manual labor, but also realized long-term gains from their reproduction. Jones-Rogers estimates that approximately 40 percent of White women personally owned enslaved individuals.⁶³

GREAT SALE
of
SLAVES
JANUARY 10, 1855

There Will Be Offered For Sale at Public Auction at the SLAVE MARKET, CHEAPSIDE, LEXINGTON, All The SLAVES of JOHN CARTER, Esquire, of LEWIS COUNTY, KY., On Account of His Removal to Indiana, a FreeState. The Slaves Listed Below Were All Raised on the CARTER PLANTATION at QUICK'S RUN, Lewis County, Kentucky.

.....

3 Bucks Aged from 20 to 26, Strong, Ablebodied
1 Wench, Sallie, Aged 42, Excellent Cook
1 Wench, Lize, Aged 23 with 6 mo. old Picinny
One Buck Aged 52, good Kennel Man
17 Bucks Aged from twelve to twenty, Excellent

.....

TERMS: Strictly CASH at Sale, as owner must realize cash, owing to his removal to West. Offers for the entire lot will be entertained previous to sale by addressing the undersigned.

JOHN CARTER, Esq.
P.O. Clarksburg Lewis County, Kentucky

Before the ban of forced migration of Africans in 1808, more than 1 million Black people were brought to America as enslaved people (a great deal more would lose their lives during the middle passage and not make it to America).⁶⁴ As the country's ideologies and opinions started to change, slavery began to be outlawed. This change, as well as the ambivalence about the citizenship of Black people, was reflected in the nation's founding documents. The new constitution acknowledged the existence of slavery and the dehumanization of Black people counting each enslaved person as three-fifths of a person. It also included language that enabled the repossession of persons "held to service or labor."⁶⁵ The language, a euphemism for slavery, was crafted to appease southern White people. The three-fifths language also ensured White men had representation in Congress (and as an extension, power) since their representation in southern states was proportionally low compared to Black people (free Black people and American Indians were counted as a full individuals, although Native Americans were not granted citizenship until 1924).^{66,67}

Though the U.S. Congress outlawed the African slave trade in 1808, the domestic trade continued and the enslaved population in the U.S. tripled over the next 50 years. By 1860, it had reached nearly 4 million, with more than half of enslaved people living in the South. To clear the way for land needed for slavery by White settlers, the federal government enacted the **Indian Removal Act** at the beginning of the 1830s. This Act forced American Indians in southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee) to leave their homelands. In what is now known as the Trail of Tears, nearly 125,000 American Indians were forced to walk hundreds of miles to designated "Indian territory" in present-day Oklahoma. Many died en route. In addition to losing their lives, they were taken from millions of acres of sacred land they had worked and cultivated for centuries and lost access to their lifeways and subsistence practices (in some cases, American Indians were also accompanied by Africans they had enslaved).^f As a result, even to date, southern states have some of the largest populations of Black people in the country⁶⁸ and American Indian populations in the south have numbers far lower than pre-colonization times.⁶⁹

America's Civil War led to the release of Black Americans from enslavement, and the **Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1868)** granted them the rights of citizenship, although true freedom and agency was elusive. While battles were being fought over the status and positioning of Black people post slavery, by the mid-1800s women were also engaged in efforts to make claims for full citizenship. White feminists like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott argued that women should not be limited to roles as wives and mothers, rejecting the ideas that men should be in the public sphere and women should be relegated to the home/private sphere.⁷⁰ Black women civil rights leaders like Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Harriet Tubman articulated the challenges expressed by many Black women who understood that the intersection of their sex *and* race played a critical role in fair treatment and their access to opportunity.⁷¹ White women found it challenging to get behind issues important to Black women such as discrimination in housing, education, and employment— and racism played a key role in their reluctance.⁷² In addition, the ratification of the **Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, which extended the right to vote to Black men**, putting them in positions

^f For more information on the enslavement of Black Africans by American Indians please see: Roberts, A. E. (2021). I've been here all the while: Black freedom on Native land. University of Pennsylvania Press and Smith, R.P. (2018). How Native American slaveholders complicate the Trail of Tears narrative. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-native-american-slaveholders-complicate-trail-tears-narrative-180968339/>

to affect political change before White women, was an affront to White women's perceived superior status as White.⁷³

Key Takeaways

The way of life during colonization and slavery were highly gendered and racialized. As this section illustrates, enslaved Black women faced tremendous hardships because of racism, and their relationships with White women during and after slavery were complex and nuanced. These complexities based in race, but also undergirded by class and power, have carried across centuries and exist to present day. American Indian and Black women also had to contend with sexism, which in the extreme was manifested through the control of their bodies through rape by White men, and for Black enslaved women, forced sexual relations with Black enslaved men. This violence against Black women's bodies specifically was perpetuated to ensure an ongoing pool of Black slave labor. The result is by the end of this period, American Indian and Black women lived at the crossroads of two of the most challenged existences of the time: being minoritized[§]/of color and being female.

~1870s-1940s: Mid-Late Reconstruction, the New Deal, and World War II

Section Overview

This section will outline the ways in which White Americans sought to undermine Black people's progress post slavery, bar them from the full rights of U.S. citizenship and economic independence, and assimilate American Indians and Alaska Natives into White patriarchal culture. We highlight how Black, American Indians, and Alaska Natives (with a focus on women) actively resisted these strategies, and how they were and still are substantially and negatively affected by them (e.g., employment in lower wage fields, such as ECE). Examples of the ways in which federal, state, and local policies and ideologies have impacted and been influenced by Black, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and White women during the period of late Reconstruction through World War II are also woven throughout this section.

Historical Context, Policies, and Laws

The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution abolished slavery and gave basic rights and citizenship to Black people. This included the ability of Black people to acquire the land of former owners, seek their own employment, and use public facilities. Despite these changes, most former slaves had no financial resources, property, residence, or education, which were key to economic independence. With no support, many were forced into sharecropping and tenancy farming,⁷⁴ and for Black women—domestic work, all of which resulted in the provision of nearly free labor by Black people for White people.^{75,76,77,78} **The Freedman's Bureau, established by the federal government** to address some of these issues, had gender discrimination embedded in its guiding principles. When given work or property by the Bureau, Black women received less compensation than Black men, irrespective of the type of work performed or their individual skills,^{79,80} and Black families headed by women were also provided less land.⁸¹

[§] Minoritized refers to populations and people who have been made to be subordinate via racism, oppression, and discrimination by majority and/or more powerful populations or people. In the United States, White is the majority and more powerful population. Native American is a political identify, as such, we refer to Native American people as being minoritized because of their history of colonization, and the fact that Native American people may not identify as people of color.

The implementation of the **Fifteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1866** gave Black men a voice in addressing these and other issues through new opportunities to vote and participate in political processes. With significant voting power, particularly in the South, Black men (many of whom had been born into slavery) were elected to public office at local levels and up to the U.S. Senate.⁸² These same rights were still not yet afforded to Black women.

Many White people, however, were not pleased with these changes, and they worked hard to restore their way of living to its prior state. **State-level Jim Crow laws** in the South (e.g., poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses) and violent terrorist activities such as lynching were effective in halting the progress of Black people. In addition, in places like South Carolina, for example, **Black Codes** resulted in fines to Black people who had jobs that were not in farming or domestic work.⁸³ The backlash from gains made during Reconstruction and the resulting laws put most Black people, and Black women in particular, at a considerable economic disadvantage.

During this same time, Black men were being erroneously charged and jailed for minor issues like vagrancy and loitering, resulting in sentences to **convict-leasing programs operated through state and federally run jails and prisons**,⁸⁴ which also affected the economic state of Black people. These programs left women as the primary breadwinners for their households until men were released. In totality, the deliberate, intentional strategies sanctioned through formal policies and laws—sharecropping, tenancy farming, domestic work, and prison-to-work convict leasing programs—effectively kept Black people in certain occupations and economically subservient and tied to White people.

Despite these challenges, Black people worked in the North and the South. In research examining workforce participation among women, economist Claudia Goldin found that in the 20 years post emancipation, Black women in the South participated in the labor market an average of three times more than White women, while Black women who were married averaged almost six times the participation rate of married White women. These findings are not surprising given the expectations of the time that White women should not be employed outside the home. White women's primary responsibilities were to care for the home and bear children, an option that was not economically feasible for most Black women. Of the Black women in the workforce, the majority worked as domestics (52%) and in farming/agriculture (44%).⁸⁵

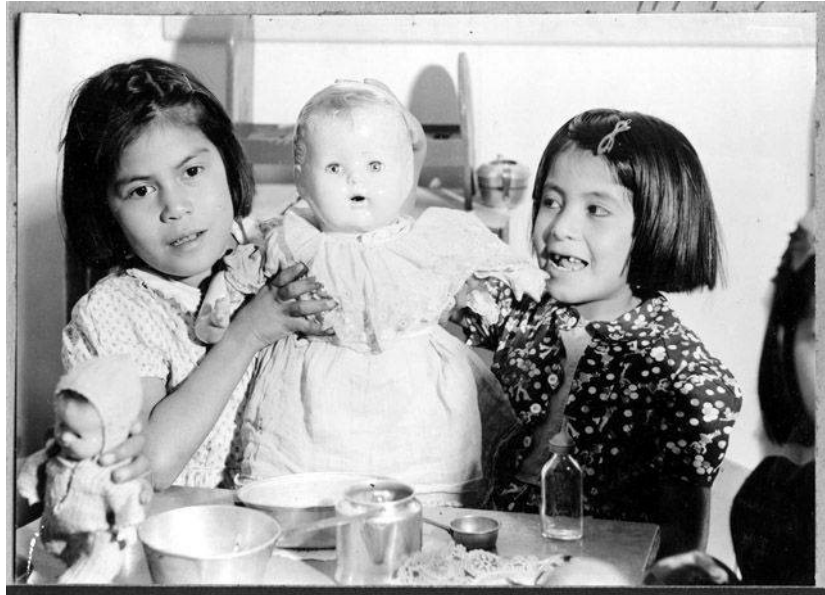


(ca. 1900) African-American woman doing laundry with a scrub board and tub, African-American girl stirring pot with 3 other children on the ground watching, and a woman in the background spreading laundry. , ca. 1900. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006679024/>.

Black women actively resisted workplace exploitation as they fought for civil rights. For instance, as identified in the previous section, the values of Black and White feminists were not aligned, resulting in Black women starting their own organizations to address issues specific to the Black community. These organizations, like the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) founded in 1896, served as the template and backbone for future organizations like the Women's Economic Councils which encouraged women engaged in laundry, domestic, and hotel and restaurant work, occupations occupied largely by Black women, to organize.⁸⁶ Black women also removed themselves from farming and the homes of White people to avoid exploitation and abuse and to meet the needs of their own families. For example, Black women built home businesses taking in laundry, which enabled them to stay clear from the oversight of White people, earn income, and care for their children.⁸⁷

However, despite Black women's efforts to disassociate themselves from low-wage domestic work, including child care, some Black leaders like Booker T. Washington encouraged Black people to stick with societal norms and adhere to "gender appropriate" roles like domestics. Institutions like the Black Mammy Memorial Institute⁸⁸ and even prestigious institutions like Spelman College, an all-female historically Black College and University (HBCU), trained Black women for domestic service.⁸⁹

American Indian people were experiencing their own challenges during this time. During the late Reconstruction period, American Indian reservations were being broken up through the federally authorized **1887 Dawes Act**. This Act was extensively harmful to American Indian people and included attempts to change American Indian cultures from collective to individualist by assimilating them into a life of ranching and agriculture.⁹⁰ These activities involved breaking up Tribally held reservation lands into individual allotments and only granting U.S. citizenship to those who accepted the divided lands. Further actions as a part of the Act reduced Tribally held reservation land by selling off “surplus” allotments to non-Native settlers, which checkerboarded American Indian-owned land and resulted in a loss of most of the 150 million acres of Tribal reservation land.⁹¹



Over 60 years prior to the Dawes Act, the federal **Office of Indian Affairs** (later called the Bureau of Indian Affairs and moved to the Department of the Interior) was established within the War Department in 1824. The Office of Indian Affairs was created to assimilate American Indian people into dominant White culture. This intentional eradication of American Indian cultures occurred in a number of ways, even predating the Office of Indian Affairs. For example, boarding schools started by Christian missionaries and via the **Civilization Fund Act of 1819** sought to assimilate American Indian, and later Alaska Native, children into White patriarchal culture. This occurred through culturally stripped and whitewashed education, physical abuse and corporal punishment, forced labor, malnourishment, sexual and mental abuse, and subservience training—including domestic service training—for girls and industrial skills training for boys.^{92,93} As documented in California, American Indian girls and young women were farmed out to White families for work and placed in Bureau of Indian Affairs-approved marriages. However, many of these girls and young women left the homes and schools where they were sent in an effort to actively reject domestic careers and unions with White men.⁹⁴

At the start of the 20th century, Black people were still struggling to carve out some semblance of economic justice. World War I brought an opportunity for a small number of Black women to take on the factory jobs of men who were away at war,⁹⁵ although they were given the most undesirable positions,⁹⁶ a pattern that continues to repeat itself throughout history. Some Black women also received monies from allotment checks from their husbands who were away fighting. After the war, however, jobs were returned to men and Black women were forced back into domestic work.⁹⁷ As Black veterans returned home from World War I, their ability to tolerate the racist conditions of the South waned.

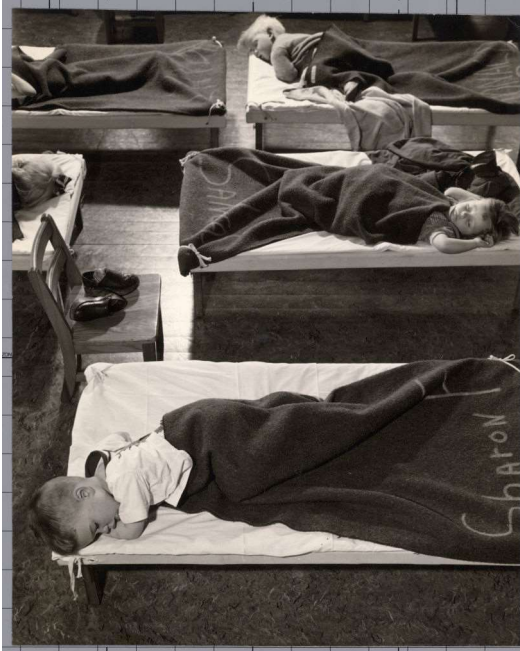
Coined the Great Migration, Black families began moving out of the South and into northern cities in droves. While employment opportunities were better in the North than in the South, there was resistance from White service men returning home looking for jobs and from immigrants with whom Black people were also competing.⁹⁸ Although northern factory jobs were often seasonal and available only to men, Black people were able to carve out better financial stability.⁹⁹ Black women in the South continued to work in domestic jobs, and to a lesser degree, factories and their own businesses. Like in the North, they were relegated to the hardest work in factories and were also physically separated from White workers.¹⁰⁰

The Great Migration overlapped with the stock market crash of the 1920s, which started the Great Depression. All Americans were impacted, but Black people were hit particularly hard. By the 1930s nearly half of Black Americans were unemployed,¹⁰¹ and when the **New Deal Legislation**—a series of programs, projects, reforms, and regulations designed to restore the country’s prosperity—was enacted, Black people were discriminated against. For instance, **the Social Security Act of 1935** included provisions like cash assistance to ensure poor mothers could stay home to care for their children. Black mothers, however, could not receive the cash assistance because, unlike White mothers, they were expected to be employed.¹⁰² (This changed in the 1960s, although rules and regulations to determine how “worthy” women were to receive the cash assistance served as mechanisms to limit the assistance provided). In another instance, the **Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938**, a key piece of the legislation that established a federal minimum wage and requirements for additional pay above a 40-hour work week, excluded domestic, agricultural, and service occupations.¹⁰³ This intentionally harmful decision effectively cemented the place of Black people as an economic underclass and sent a message that Black women’s labor in homes and agriculture was most certainly not valued.

The “Indian New Deal,” formally known as the **Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934**, was designed to remedy some of the harmful previous assimilation policies like the Dawes Act, but it, too, was destructive. For example, it had no provisions to preserve American Indian and Alaska Native cultures and maintained assimilation practices, including subsidizing 100 community day schools on Tribal reservation lands. The IRA also incentivized the drafting and adoption of Tribal constitutions that had to be reviewed and approved by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, a practice that resulted in the continued lack of recognition of Tribal sovereignty by the U.S. federal government.¹⁰⁴ While largely damaging, the IRA did administer programming for the **Indian Division of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**, which was started in 1933.^{105,106} One function of the CCC was to address financial hardships brought about by the Great Depression; the program, however, was geared toward men.¹⁰⁷

The economic challenges brought on by the Great Depression were not confined to the U.S. Economic and political instability resulted in the rise of dictatorships in Italy and Germany and in the build-up of the Japanese military. While hesitant to become involved in conflict, the U.S. eventually went to war when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. World War II had a positive impact on the economy. Men and women of all races, including White, Black, and Native American people, joined the military and worked in jobs related to the country’s defense. Despite **Executive Order 8802**, which stated all persons, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, would be allowed to participate fully in the defense of the United States, Black people, including Black women, were placed in segregated units and given positions like janitors,¹⁰⁸—once again, working in the least desired and lowest paying positions.

The high number of women working to support the war effort resulted in the need for widespread child care, which was addressed by the **Lanham Act of 1941**.



This federal law was designed to help communities with needs related to the war, including child care. The Lanham centers were the first instance of the federal government providing widespread child care during a time when child care was considered a necessity. Any child who had parents working in an industry related to the war effort was eligible to attend, including children who were not from poor families. Before the Lanham centers, privately run charitable organizations provided custodial child care to primarily poor and immigrant families; the government's involvement in child care was minimal and primarily related to providing care so mothers who were poor could work.¹⁰⁹

While the government provided guidelines and recommendations on how Lanham centers should be run, their operations varied. In general, care was provided by trained staff and was based on the latest research on child development. Teachers also received college credit for attending additional training.^{110,111} (We were unable to locate information about the amount or types of

compensation staff received.) Also, centers offered around the clock care and meals. The government initially provided a 50-percent subsidy for the centers, which eventually grew to cover about two-thirds of the costs. State and locality funding, coupled with fees paid by parents, provided the remaining dollars, a structure that federally funded ECE settings still use today. In 1943, the daily cost to parents for child care in a Lanham center was approximately 50 cents (which translates into about \$7 per day today).¹¹² More than 3,100 federally subsidized child care centers serving more than half a million children operated during this time in every state, except New Mexico and in Washington D.C.¹¹³

Once World War II ended, funding for the centers dried up. While centers were open to all races, there is some indication that they were racially segregated and inhospitable to Black children and families.¹¹⁴ They also only met a fraction of the need. Women (particularly White women) lobbied hard for the centers to continue operating by writing letters, protesting in the streets, and circulating petitions. Their reasons for wanting the facilities to remain open varied but coalesced around the need for employment to support children and the lack of other forms of accessible and high-quality care.

Conservative backlash and continuing expectations that the best child care was from a mother, led to most of the centers closing. (California, New York, and Philadelphia maintained state funding.) Other than the currently existing military system of child care, the **Defense Department's Child Development Program**¹¹⁵ (more on this in the following section), the U.S. has never provided child care at the scale of the Lanham centers despite the fact that the **Comprehensive Child Care Act**, which ensured child care for all U.S. citizens but was vetoed by President Nixon in 1971, passed Congress. The subsequent challenges with funding public child care have had a trickle-down effect on child care workers' wages today.



Key Takeaways

Reconstruction was a time of economic and racial strife for Black Americans. Backlash from angry White people because of the “freeing” of Black people from slavery sought to keep Black people subordinate and relegated to menial and poorly compensated work. For Black women, this occurred through a mix of domestic and agricultural labor in the South, and primarily domestic labor in the North.¹¹⁶ Concurrently, American Indian and Alaska Native girls and young women were placed in boarding schools, stripped of their language and culture, abused, and farmed out to White families for domestic purposes.¹¹⁷

Both groups of women had few options for dignifying work or wages, yet they exercised agency and resisted these imposed limits. Despite considerable hardship and the dual “curse” of being female and minoritized/of color, marginally free and fiscally challenged, these women fought the racism of White men and women and the sexism of White patriarchal culture. White women, too, resisted patriarchy. After World War II they fought (albeit unsuccessfully) for “universal” child care which would help facilitate their economic stability and independence. The central issues of the eras explored here—citizenship and democracy, economic justice and land ownership, violence, forced assimilation, and agency—illustrate just how local, state, and federal policies can support or hinder human rights and dignity, including issues related to employment and just compensation for women.

~1945-1970s: Civil Rights

Section Overview

This section outlines the ways in which policies, laws, and programs sought to end race related discrimination and protect the equal rights all Americans highlighting differences in success, depending on factors like where they reside and class. We also emphasize how minoritized women and women of color actively organized to push for better treatment in the labor market in positions such as child care, and how they worked to reshape narratives about their roles as workers and mothers.

Historical Context, Policies, and Laws

As previously outlined, factors such as colonization, racism, discrimination, and low wages played a significant role in the inability of Native American and Black people to generate wealth, including through accumulating assets such as homeownership. In the 1930s, the process of using race to determine a neighborhood’s mortgage risk (i.e., redlining) resulted in the continuous rejection of Black people’s mortgage applications (i.e., home ownership loans). This inability to get a loan for home ownership led to racially segregated communities where Black people typically rented from White landlords (who benefitted economically), primarily in underfunded and under-resourced cities. White people, on the other hand, were able to purchase homes in heavily resourced suburbs with amenities.¹¹⁸ After World War II, many of these purchases were subsidized by the **Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944**, also referred to as the **GI Bill**.¹¹⁹ In addition to low-cost mortgages, the GI Bill provided low-interest loans for business development, unemployment compensation, and assistance with tuition and living expenses for high school, college, or trade schools.¹²⁰

While the GI Bill was available to all veterans, administrative challenges severely limited the benefit for Black Americans. For example, southern states pushed for and won a proposal allowing states instead of the federal government to administer the programs funded by the GI Bill.¹²¹ Once entrusted with this responsibility, White state officials simply denied Black veteran’s applications.¹²² Moreover, issues like segregated colleges and universities and neighborhoods curtailed the ability of Black veterans to successfully use the benefits for education or housing.¹²³ With home ownership being a critical lever for generating wealth,¹²⁴ and education and housing stability playing an important role in acquiring employment¹²⁵ and long-term success, the inability of Black veterans to benefit from the GI Bill likely

exacerbated already existing racial disparities in income and access to opportunity.¹²⁶ These inequities have potentially negatively affected not just Black veterans but also the wealth of future generations of their families.



Though the civil rights movement started in the 1940s, the 1960s and 1970s were key in advancing explicit rights benefiting women, wages, and the ECE field. In 1961, President Kennedy created the **Commission on the Status of Women** to investigate issues related to women's equality under federal laws, including in employment and education. The **1963 Peterson Report**, developed as part of the Commission, advocated for the traditional, nuclear family, but also called out challenges in the nation related to unequal wages, legal inequality, and a lack of support services.¹²⁷ The report did not bring about immediate changes

during the Kennedy Administration, but it did lay the groundwork for the following administration under President Lyndon Johnson.

In 1964, President Johnson passed the **1964 Civil Rights Act**. While not widely known, discrimination based on sex was an **amendment in Title VII** of the Act, an attempt to prevent the bill from passing.¹²⁸ The strategy failed, and the **Civil Rights Act** and **Executive Order 11246** (which included enforcing laws to prevent discrimination against women) were implemented into law. **The Civil Rights Act** also established the **Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC)**,¹²⁹ which administers and enforces civil rights laws against workplace discrimination.¹³⁰ These laws and agency were pivotal in facilitating the advancement of Black women seeking to transition from menial and low wage work into less physically demanding and higher paying jobs.¹³¹

Also in 1964, the second largest federally funded child care effort, established through **the Head Start Act**,¹³² was created to address racial disparities related to poverty.¹³³ The Johnson Administration officially launched Project Head Start in 1965 as an eight-week compensatory summer program "designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs."¹³⁴ The program focused on Black children and families recognizing that southern states were loath to spend money on or include Black children in state funded human service or ECE programs.¹³⁵ The program also provided mothers opportunities to participate in the program by volunteering or serving in paid positions.¹³⁶

Head Start programs also provided child care support to Native American communities. The Head Start programs operating in 34 American Indian and Alaska Native communities were the first Tribally operated programs in the U.S. and spurred movement for increased Tribal sovereignty over ECE programs. Early Head Start, for families with children ages birth to 3, was officially established in 1994.



O'Halloran, T. J., photographer. (1965) *Operation Head Start at Webb School*, 1965. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016647284/>.

In March 1969, a memo to the Advisory Committee on Head Start noted that establishing Head Start helped produce "an unprecedented amount of national interest in the importance of early childhood

development.”¹³⁷ Shortly thereafter, the federal government attempted to establish a universal child care system in the United States. Like the **Lanham Act** child care effort of World War II, the **Comprehensive Child Development Act in 1971** allocated substantial dollars toward developing nationally funded, locally administered, comprehensive child care centers open to all families on a sliding scale basis.¹³⁸ As mentioned previously, the bill passed with bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress. It was ultimately vetoed by President Nixon who was pressured by conservatives who argued that child care was communist in nature and detrimental to the nuclear family,¹³⁹ an issue still being debated today. This position was also likely a way to resist White women’s increasing presence in the workforce and their larger demands for female equality, core facets of the second wave of the women’s movement.¹⁴⁰

In tandem with the women’s movement, domestic workers, led by Dorothy Bolden, founder of the **National Domestic Workers Union of American in 1960**, and welfare right activists through the **National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO)** were ramping up their efforts to address issues related to equality for women. The Domestic Workers Union, made up mostly of Black women, sought better compensation in the form of higher wages, vacation time, and training.^{141,142} The NWRO movement was multi-racial and had Black female and male leadership. By the late 1960s, the NWRO numbered almost 25,000.¹⁴³ These women were not concerned about the rights of women to work (most had been exploited in the labor market), but instead advocated for policies that would enable women of all races and varied income levels to balance home responsibilities with paid work.¹⁴⁴ This advocacy included demands for higher public assistance/welfare payments and more respectful treatment by case workers.

Both movements were fueled in part by inaction and punitive behaviors of political leaders who associated domestic work and welfare receipt with age-old, stereotypical caricatures of Black women as immoral, lazy, and undeserving.¹⁴⁵ The organizers of these movements sought to change the narrative by advocating for better compensation and applying the White middle-class definition of work to all families.^{146,147} By 1974, the **1938 Fair Labor and Standards Act**, which provided workers with a federal minimum wage, overtime pay, and child labor protections was finally amended to include domestic service workers.¹⁴⁸

Key Takeaways

In the years before the 1960s and 1970s, people who are minoritized, people of color, and women laid the foundation for introducing and passing several U.S. laws that resulted in systemic and social change designed to protect the constitutional rights of every American regardless of their color, race, sex, or national origin. The lessons from this era (and others) suggest that the impact of colonialism and slavery continue in the form of racist and paternalistic practices embedded in the nation’s policies and laws. These racist and sexist policies have restricted opportunities for women, segregating them to occupations like ECE, and have stifled their economic growth and independence. At the same time, however, shifts in mores and ideological changes were occurring based on national events, demographic changes, advocacy, and efforts to organize. Policies, particularly federal ones, were important levers to address civil rights and compensation issues. A key challenge, however, was (and continues to be), geography, which plays a significant role in the way policies are created and implemented. Where a person lives has the potential to constrain opportunity across a lifetime and for future generations. The decentralization of federal policies enables states to implement policy in ways they see fit. As with preceding sections, this section, and subsequent sections will show, this strategy is particularly problematic to the economic status of Black people and women residing in southern states.

~1970s-2020s: Organizing, Advocacy, and Voice

Section Overview

In this section, we will focus on three key policies—the **Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1989**, the **Military Child Care Act of 1989**, and **COVID-19 Recovery Relief Funding of the 2020s**—to understand how current policies have affected the compensation and preparation of the ECE workforce.

Historical Context, Policies, and Laws

The 1970s built on the issues that were front and center in the 1960s. Minoritized groups—Native American people, Black people, and women—continued to fight for equality and began to see long awaited gains in their struggles for educational, employment, and compensation parity. The 1980s through 1990s brought about increased activity related to ECE, spurred on, in large part, by the continued increase in White working mothers, the gap in public investment in child care, the perception that Black women on public assistance were gaming the system, and increased attention by the media to all of these issues.



Research and organizing also played a role in emphasizing the importance of ECE and related issues like compensation. A 1980s landmark study conducted by the Child Care Employee Project (CCEP)^h laid out clear links between compensation, turnover, and program quality in the child care field and how these issues negatively impacted children.^{149,150} A grassroots effort, the Worthy Wage Campaign, drew on these findings to raise awareness about these issues and brought them to the forefront of the public's attention.

Around the same time, the Alliance for Better Child Care (a coalition of national groups interested in ECE issues), helped to shepherd in the **Act for Better Child Care** (the ABC bill) to Congress. The bill was designed so that federal dollars could be passed down to states to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of child care. Authorized in 1990, the bill eventually became the **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)**, a workforce support for primarily low-income families to help parents work or participate in education or training activities. CCDBG created the **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**, which combines CCDBG with **Social Security Act entitlement dollars** into one federally funded child care stream to states.¹⁵¹ The bill also included monies to expand the **Earned Income Tax Credit** for working families with children under age 19 and a small **Supplemental Credit** for infants. A key piece of the bill—federal standards related to quality of care—were removed to ensure the bill would pass. The final bill included language mandating that participating programs had to adhere to state child care licensing/registration requirements. The **CCDBG Reauthorization of 2014** included revisions to strengthen child care provider health and safety requirements and quality including monies that can be used to increase the compensation of ECE professionals.¹⁵²

^h CCEP is currently named the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW).

The late 1980s also saw significant changes in child care for military families through the **Military Child Care Act (MCCA) of 1989**. Before the MCCA was implemented, military child care had a notoriously bad reputation. Oversight was minimal; child abuse scandals were prevalent; the physical facilities were in poor condition; and staff received little training, were poorly compensated, and had rates of high turnover.^{153,154,155} The MCCA

established mandated standards for child care for all military branches. Efforts to change the culture and to allocate funding was an uphill battle, but one message seemed to resonate: Providing accessible and high-quality child care to service members helps to ensure the readiness, efficiency, and retention of the military workforce.¹⁵⁶



150924-M-BL734-051.JPG Photo By: Lance Cpl. Jonah Lovy
<https://www.beaufort.marines.mil/CommStrat/Photos/igphoto/2001297842/>

Currently, the Department of Defense (DOD) operates the largest employer sponsored child care program in the country. Approximately 23,000 ECE professionals care for about 200,000 children at a cost of more than \$1 billion a year. The program funds

accredited child development centers (CDCs), center- and home-based that operate full-time. (Requests have been made to expand their hours to accommodate service members with non-traditional work schedules.) The CDC care is subsidized, and subsidies are also available for private child care centers outside of military bases. Child care is part of a service members' compensation package and is based on the family's total income. Fees are generally lower than civilian child care.

Early care and education professionals in the military system are paid wages that are similar to other DOD employees with comparable levels of training and experience. (In 2013 this was about \$15 per hour.) They are also required to have at least a high school diploma or general educational development certificate (GED) and pass a background check. As with other areas of the military, ECE professionals must engage in continuous training which is paid for and provided to them. Early care and education workers also receive health insurance, paid leave, retirement benefits, and yearly pay increases.^{i,157} Turnover is low, likely because the pay and benefits incentivize people to stay. Along with the Lanham centers and Head Start, the military child care program is one of the best examples of large-scale, subsidized child care implementation in the country. One key difference, however, is the level of compensation of the workforce. The wages and benefits provided to military child care workers appear to promote high-quality care, a decent standard of living for workers, and staff longevity.¹⁵⁸

ⁱ The Head Start Expansion and Quality Improvement Act of 1990 allocated \$470 million to increase salaries of Head Start workers.

A new struggle to meet the needs of ECE professionals (as well as children and families) arose in 2020 with the arrival of the coronavirus in the U.S. Perhaps no single event in our country's recent history has had such an altering effect on the ECE system and the workforce as the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis. The pandemic has laid bare the existing inequities in race and gender and the



underfunding and fragmentation of the ECE system. This unprecedented experience resulted in facility closures, decreases in enrollment, increases in operating expenses, and significant workforce layoffs. As a result, and to the relief of the ECE industry, families, and other key stakeholders, the federal government is recognizing the significant role that ECE plays in the lives of families with young children and the country's overall economy. Two pieces of legislation have begun the process of addressing these ongoing challenges.

The first, the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020** provided an unprecedented level of funding for child care relief.

Money went from federal to state coffers through the CCDBG (\$3.5 billion) and Head Start programs (\$750 million). Funds have been used to purchase protective equipment, pay staff,¹⁵⁹ and develop innovative programming to better support different types of providers.¹⁶⁰ In addition, small businesses were able to apply for general economic relief through the federally funded **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)**. In line with the country's challenges related to racism, fair access to economic supports and issues related to differential access for ECE facilities/businesses and loan approvals (or lack thereof) for people and communities of color have been cited.¹⁶¹

The most recent law, the 2021 **American Rescue Plan**, included \$39 billion in dedicated monies for child care provider relief, including \$15 billion for the CCDBG program and \$24 billion for a child care stabilization fund. Personnel costs, employee benefits, premium pay, and costs for staff recruitment and retention are all allowable expenditures.¹⁶² Administrative funding is also available through 2025 to provide technical assistance and to assess how the stabilization efforts are unfolding, including how money is being allocated.¹⁶³

Key Takeaways

During the early part of this 50-year period, issues around ECE compensation were being raised to the fore of the country's conscious. Although President Nixon vetoed the **Comprehensive Child Care Legislation Act in 1971**, the number of women of all races in the labor force was skyrocketing during the mid-1970s through the 1980s. Organizing became a key public policy strategy of the 1980s and was used as a tool to draw support for women's needs including child care and adequate compensation for workers (it is important to note that while these issues were framed as women's issues, men, families, and society benefit socially and financially from women's workforce participation and access to childcare and fair compensation). As previous sections articulate, there were differences of opinion between Black and White women regarding the necessity of putting child care compensation at the top of their agendas. These disagreements stemmed in large part because White women thought a focus on women as child care providers would reinforce traditional roles for women that they were trying to escape. Black women, however, viewed their roles as mothers and workers as different sides of the same coin.¹⁶⁴

Differences in occupational status also likely played a role. As White women entered the labor force in growing numbers, they often became employed in "higher-end" service sector jobs or mid-level White-collar jobs. In contrast, Black women, who have continuously outpaced White women in their formal labor force participation, took positions that facilitated White women's labor force participation, such as

teaching assistants in pre-schools, nursing aides, maids in hotels, cleaners in office buildings, cooks and cashiers in fast food outlets.¹⁶⁵ These occupations include services in the household that were once performed by the mothers in the family but that became marketized after White women left the home and entered the workforce. While occupations of Black women have shifted in the last 50 years, they continue to be concentrated in low-paying industries that lack the same basic rights and protections afforded to other occupations, and these are the very occupations that tend to be excluded from national- and state-level worker protections.¹⁶⁶

Military child care facilities provide useful lessons for addressing disparities. The military prides itself that pay disparities based on gender are nonexistent in their environment (although there do appear to be differences in promotion rates).¹⁶⁷ Parity in compensation is possible because pay is based on 1) pay grade, and 2) length of employment. Those two factors ensure that employees get paid the same, regardless of gender. Racial differences, however, are not as easily controlled for, and rates of promotion, for example, may vary in military child care facilities. Exploring this issue further may help inform how to “do” fair pay in ECE outside the military.

Findings and Synthesis

Providing ECE greatly benefits society. With more women in the workforce than ever before, and with the impact of the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, it is imperative that the nation move toward a cohesive approach to ECE that includes adequate and fair compensation and preparation for those who care for and are educating our nation’s most precious resource—infants, toddlers, and young children.

This landscape scan draws on specific policies as historic markers to trace the ways that race, gender, and class have shaped perceptions about ECE, including policies related to ECE workforce compensation. These findings highlight a number of themes that are important for framing and understanding the content, policy, and program recommendations shared in the companion white paper, *The Time is Right: Addressing Inequity in Compensation and Preparation of the Early Care and Education Workforce*.



These issues are highlighted in the bullets below:

- Women are the majority of the ECE workforce, and minoritized women and women of color are disproportionately represented in ECE settings relative to their population numbers.
- Child care labor is undervalued and poorly compensated in large part because it is linked to and is considered an extension of motherhood (i.e., women’s work) and is also associated with women who are minoritized and women of color.
- While child care is undervalued and poorly compensated across the board, there is an earnings hierarchy in the ECE profession, and women who are minoritized and women of color are at the bottom. This is due in large part to racism, sexism, and patriarchy, which results in compounded economic burdens for Black women as well as other women who are minoritized and of color.
- Colonization, racism, and sexism are embedded in local, state, and federal policies that have devalued people who are minoritized, people of color, women, and the field of child care. Federal policies, however, have also served as a vehicle to address racism and inequities embedded in policies.

- Decisions by the federal government to allow states to implement and oversee the application of federal policies has given states the power to continue and reinforce racist and sexist policies related to compensation, particularly in the South.
- Ideologies and policies are malleable and do shift.
 - To address compensation issues, child care needs to be viewed as a public responsibility, not a private issue.
 - The Covid-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to move ECE compensation and preparation issues forward as governments are increasingly feeling public pressure to put child care issues front and center, moving the focus to public from private.
 - Changes in the way that Black women (and other women who are minoritized and women of color) are viewed, as well as attention to the role of women more generally, will likely be necessary to affect long-term systemic changes in policies related to ECE. Black women in particular are consistently portrayed negatively, and garner little sympathy, empathy, or understanding from society at large, despite their critical role in building the wealth of the country and caring for the nation's children. If ECE is to be a fundamental part of the infrastructure of the country, shifts regarding perceptions of Black women, women who are minoritized, women of color, and the role of all women will need to occur.
- There is limited data on the composition of the full universe ECE workforce, which hinders our understanding of who is involved in ECE and the types of policies and programs that might be needed to attend to their needs.¹⁶⁸

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The Time is Right: Addressing Inequity in Compensation and Preparation of the Early Care and Education Workforce

A White Paper



September 2021

Child **TRENDS**

Introduction

Poor compensation of the early care and education (ECE) workforce^a has deep historical roots. Domestic work, including child care, has long been undervalued, in large part because of notions about race and women. This devaluing of people who are (and have been) minoritized, people of color, and women has been codified into local, state, and federal policies over centuries, showing up in racist and sexist policies in



the funding and structure of the ECE system. One of the key ways in which the primarily female ECE workforce is affected is inadequate compensation.

As the companion landscape scan details, while ECE workers have a shared experience of poor compensation resulting from racist and gender-related discriminatory policies and practices, , the issue of inadequate compensation is even more challenging for Black ECE professionals^b. Data exist but are more limited on the history of ECE compensation for Native American and Hispanic women. Like Black women, however, they too are compensated at rates lower than White women in the field.^{1,2} These groups also have differing geographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and political experiences that shape their earning experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and amplified the challenges of the ECE workforce while simultaneously providing a unique and unprecedented opportunity to reimagine the ECE system, including issues related to compensation. Increased public awareness and perception of the value of child care has placed ECE at the center of conversations related to the stability of the nation's families and the economy. As policymakers consider how to best respond to the pandemic and the growing crisis in the child care workforce, they will play a key role either by addressing racial and gender inequities in compensation head on or by allowing these inequities to grow through their inaction.

This paper highlights ways to better center equity when developing and implementing policies to improve compensation, preparation, and stability for ECE professionals. We review the challenges with a focus on the policies, systems, and institutions that have contributed to racial and gender inequities; describe policies and strategies enacted at various levels (e.g., local, state, and federal) to improve compensation and preparation for ECE professionals; and present key considerations for developing and advancing policies that center racial equity in ways that promote systemic change.

^a Across these resources we refer to early care and education staff collectively as ECE professionals, the ECE workforce or early educators. Other terminology—child care workers, center-based providers, and home-based providers, for example—is used when citing research or data that use these particular terms or titles. Unless specifically noted, references to the ECE professionals, the workforce or early educators excludes center-based or ECE program leadership, such as directors, administrators, and principals.

^b This paper uses the identifiers Native American, Black, and Hispanic to refer to people who respectively trace their roots to America pre-colonization, Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Spain. We understand, however, that preferences vary and there are ongoing debates regarding the use of ethnic descriptors for populations highlighted in these resources.

Background and Supplemental Material

The issues of ECE workforce compensation, preparation, and stability in the U.S. cannot be understood without recognizing the history of child-rearing more generally and the ways in which it has been fundamentally shaped by race, gender, and class. These three themes have, in turn, influenced and been influenced by the laws and policies enacted across different time periods in the country's history. The landscape scan, *Historical Antecedents of Systemic Racism and Other Forms of Oppression on the Early Care and Education Workforce*, uses a historical lens to chronicle the interconnection between race, gender, class, and politics, providing a foundation for understanding the issues and recommendations put forth in this white paper. We also include a list of supplemental readings and resources for those seeking additional information and/or context to complete and inform their understanding of ECE workforce compensation, preparation, and stability in the United States (U.S.).

Broad Overview of the Early Care and Education Workforce and Their Compensation and Preparation

Data vary depending on the source, but consistently show that women compose nearly all (92% to 95%) of the ECE workforce across the U.S.³ In addition to being primarily female, people who are minoritized or of color are 40 percent of the workforce,⁴ making the profession more racially and ethnically diverse than the overall U.S. population. This diversity is also reflected in the operation of child care businesses, where half are owned by people who are minoritized or of color.⁵

Providing high-quality ECE depends in large part on a diverse and skilled workforce that is supported by livable wages and access to education, training, and professional development.⁶ These conditions are woefully lacking in the ECE field currently.^{7,8} Insufficient compensation, including salary, wages, and other benefits or supports (i.e., health insurance, retirement savings, paid sick leave, or paid vacation time), offered by employers has been consistently identified as a concern for the ECE workforce and has remained a significant barrier to creating an accessible, high-quality ECE system.⁹

Definitions

Early care and education includes settings where infants, toddlers, and young children are cared for and taught by adults other than their parents or primary caregivers with whom they reside. Home visiting programs, where individuals work with parents/caretakers while their children are present, is not considered part of the ECE system for the purpose of these papers.

Compensation includes salary, wages, and other benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement savings, paid sick leave, or paid vacation time or supports (e.g., training or professional development) offered by employers.

Center-based child care facilities are operated in commercial spaces and can be privately or publicly funded. Center-based child care facilities tend to be larger and serve more children than home-based child care facilities.

Home-based childcare facilities are operated in residential areas out of a private home. Home-based childcare providers are funded by monies from caretakers/ parents and like center-based child care, also have the option of receiving public dollars if they meet certain criteria. Home-based child care facilities are typically smaller, have less staff and serve fewer children than center-based facilities.

Compensation of the Early Care and Education Workforce

Inadequate compensation impacts ECE professionals' well-being and fuels high rates of turnover, which in turn, can have a negative impact on children's healthy development and school readiness.^{10,11} Settings with



the lowest wages, benefits, or professional supports generally have higher rates of turnover, and these settings also tend to serve higher numbers of children who are minoritized or of color and have more Black workers.¹² The result is that turnover disproportionately affects minoritized children and ECE professionals of color, especially Black people. This trend is concerning given that a diverse workforce is key for providing high-quality care and educational experiences and reducing racial disparities in academic outcomes.¹³

Poor compensation also results in challenges recruiting and hiring staff which impacts the overall availability of child care slots for working families.¹⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue. Current, former, and prospective ECE professionals have reported reticence about the ECE field because of concerns related to COVID transmission, job stability, and wages.¹⁵ In a recent survey by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 80 percent of child care centers reported a staffing shortage; which resulted in half of these programs serving fewer children, and one quarter of them reducing their operating hours.¹⁶ Across all settings, more than one-third of respondents were considering leaving their job or closing their business in the next year. This number was even higher for ECE professionals who are minoritized and ECE professionals of color—55 percent of whom were considering leaving the field.¹⁷

This issue has the potential to get worse. Reports indicate that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the drop off in the number of employees, the retail and hospitality industries have increased their pay and are offering better benefits to attract staff. For instance, since the COVID-19 pandemic, McDonald's has been offering more flexibility, and in some cases child care supports and help with college tuition to attract prospective workers.¹⁸ Positions like this generally require less expertise and skill than jobs in ECE, and ECE settings have difficulty competing with these strategies because of the way they are structured and funded.

Current Context for Supporting More Equitable Compensation

Addressing workforce compensation requires a more comprehensive transformation of the financing and organization of the ECE system in the U.S. Fragmentation of the system at local, state, Tribal, and federal levels has resulted in challenges within ECE structures and institutions that contribute to inadequate compensation and racial inequities for the workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic and shifts in public awareness about the importance of ECE has provided a unique opportunity to focus on changes needed to the ECE system. As families and policymakers recognize ECE as an essential part of the country's economic recovery, there is a window of opportunity to advocate for policies that advance large-scale change, instead of piecemeal relief. Making meaningful and

sustainable changes for the ECE workforce that centers racial equity and that does not put an undue burden on families, however, must also be accompanied by significant public investment.

In the following section, we describe the compensation of ECE professionals, paying special attention to racial inequities and the systems or institutions that have contributed to them. We then share examples of policy solutions and programs that have been implemented or tested to address ECE compensation and preparation, including the identification of successful outcomes and significant limitations.

Challenges Related to Early Care and Education Workforce Compensation

Inadequate Wages and Benefits

Low wages in the ECE workforce are well-documented. The *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, published biannually by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, explores ECE workforce pay across the U.S. in detail. In 2020, the average hourly wage of child care workers^c was \$11.65. In all but two states, these individuals earned less than two-thirds of the median wage for all occupations in the state — a threshold used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for defining low wage work.¹⁹ In addition to being more than twice as likely to live below the federal poverty line than those in other professions,²⁰ child care workers also use public assistance programs at higher rates (53% compared to 25% of the overall workforce).²¹

As the landscape scan illustrates, ECE professionals earning inadequate pay is not a new phenomenon. Challenges with low pay reflects a longstanding public perception of child care as “women’s work” — an unskilled, domestic task not deserving of respect or adequate compensation. This has been especially true for women who are minoritized and women of color, who have been “literally and effectively coerced into domestic labor” for centuries for little or no compensation.²² Issues regarding the domestic labor of minoritized women and women of color, specifically Black women, are also bound in class. Black women’s labor enabled White mothers to enter the professional workforce in droves in the 20th century, resulting in entrenched segregation and racial inequities that exist today.²³

Women who are minoritized and women of color in the ECE workforce also experience compensation disadvantages because of their gender, occupation, and race. Moreover, regardless of the field in which they work, Black, Hispanic, and Native American women experience some of the greatest lifetime wage gaps and rates of poverty compared to men, and also compared to women from other racial and ethnic groups.²⁴ Because the ECE field is one of the lowest paid workforces in the country, these inequities are incredibly concerning. Even after accounting for the education level of ECE professionals and the ages of children with whom they work, Black ECE professionals earn \$0.78 less per hour than their White counterparts.^{25,26} Rates of poverty are also highest for women who are minoritized and women of color — especially for those who are mothers. Overall, 21 percent of child care workers who are mothers live below the poverty line; however, this average obscures



^c “Child care workers” and “preschool teachers” are specific categories defined and used by the U.S. Department of Labor in reporting current national and state-level data on wages by occupation.

the huge racial disparities that exist— the poverty rate for White mothers is only 14 percent, compared to 28 percent for Hispanic mothers, and 34 percent for Black mothers.²⁷ Minoritized women and women of color also face structural barriers, such as discrimination and racism in hiring practices, that results in fewer employment opportunities than White women or men, which limits their ability to earn a living wage.²⁸

Alongside low pay, ECE professionals face an additional burden of having minimal access to benefits and professional supports. Only 15 percent of child care workers receive health insurance through their employer compared to an average of nearly 50 percent across all other occupations.²⁹ Even fewer have access to an employer sponsored retirement or pension plan –10 percent of child care workers compared to 39 percent of workers in other occupations.³⁰

Lack of Wage Parity with Other Educators

The ECE workforce has lower wages, fewer benefits, and less access to professional supports than the K-12 workforce. While preschool teachers who work in public schools earn more than their counterparts in other settings,³¹ they still have considerably lower salaries than kindergarten teachers. For instance, in 2020, preschool teachers made an average of \$31,930 per year, about half of the average salary for kindergarten teachers.³² Importantly, this pay gap persists even in states where education requirements are the same for preschool and kindergarten teachers.³³ Unlike the K-12 public school system, where there are uniform pay scales and consistent expectations or qualifications for educators, the ECE system is fragmented. This lack of cohesiveness is reflective of the public's perception that the education of young children requires less skill, and thus is less deserving of higher compensation.³⁴ Additionally, most ECE professionals are not connected to unions or other professional organizations that can bargain collectively for greater compensation.³⁵



Disparities in earnings also exist outside the education workforce. Students graduating from college with a degree in ECE have the lowest predicted earnings of all college graduates, making only \$3,000 per year more than the average high school graduate.^{36,37} This disparity is especially true for women. In 2015, the median wage for women child care workers with a bachelor's degree was less than half of the median wage for similarly educated women in the workforce overall.³⁸

Stagnant and Underfunded Subsidy Reimbursement

The current system of financing and delivering ECE in the U.S. is fragmented. Most programs are financed primarily through tuition payments from families, along with a mix of public funding from local, state, Tribal, and federal governments. Underfunding is also a chronic issue,³⁹ reflecting centuries of racist and sexist policies and practices that have failed to view care and education for young children as an essential public good. This apathy has led to inadequate compensation for workers, high costs of care for families, and unequal access to educational opportunities for minoritized children and children of color whose families are more often unable to afford the fees for high-quality care.⁴⁰

Since the late 20th century, many families and early educators have relied on federal subsidies — administered through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) — to help make child care affordable and accessible. The CCDF is administered to states, territories, and Tribal governments as a block grant, allowing each jurisdiction considerable discretion in how they determine eligibility and allocate funds. For

example, states can set their own reimbursement rates for participating providers. In all but seven states, these rates are set below the level recommended by the federal government for ensuring equal access,⁴¹ and the number of states setting their rates at the recommended level has declined significantly in the last two decades.⁴² Although CCDF remains the largest federal source of child care assistance, it has been so chronically underfunded that the recent influx of COVID funding via the American Jobs Plan⁴³ has still resulted in many children being underserved. In fact, in 2021, fewer than 15 percent of eligible children received subsidies,⁴⁴ a sobering statistic that is indicative of the fact that the U.S. spends less public money in supporting child care than most other industrialized countries.⁴⁵

Without public investment and funding that supports the true cost of child care, ECE settings are left with few options to address issues related to affordability and compensation. Their only viable option to increase worker compensation is to raise care costs for families. This option, however, is untenable; families are spending an average of 10 percent of their income on child care currently, and families experiencing poverty, who are more likely to be minoritized or of color, are spending more of their income proportionately.^{46,47} Therefore, policy solutions that address equitable compensation for the ECE workforce must attend to broader funding structures within the ECE system.

Policies and Programs to Address Early Care and Education Workforce Compensation

Here we describe the major policies or strategies that have been implemented to address issues related to ECE workforce compensation. Where applicable, we also share examples from the field, including information about the positive outcomes and limitations of each strategy, as well as the extent to which the policy addresses compensation and race equity.

Tax Credits and Wage Supplement Programs

Refundable income tax credits, also referred to as wage credits, provide a one-time payment to ECE professionals in the form of a tax refund. Refund amounts vary based on criteria such as educational attainment, work experience, or program quality rating. Currently, only a few states offer, or have recently considered legislation to offer, tax credits for ECE professionals.⁴⁸



The Louisiana School Readiness Tax Credit is an example of such a program. Established in 2007, it provides tax refunds to the ECE workforce, as well as to families and businesses that support child care. In addition to providing financial relief, the credit was designed to encourage participation in the state's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). To that end, workers are only eligible to receive the credit if they work in programs that participate in the QRIS. Tax credit amounts ranged from \$1,788 to \$3,574 in 2020 and are based on the educational level of the ECE professional.⁴⁹

In a similar vein, wage supplement programs provide short-term financial relief to ECE professionals in the form of payments referred to as stipends, supplements, bonuses, or rewards. These payments are usually provided by states and are intended to increase compensation, promote continuing education, and encourage retention of the ECE workforce. Programs set their own eligibility criteria and award amounts which are often tied to education levels and

retention. Currently, 12 states offer some sort of wage supplement program to ECE professionals. Among those who provide data on award amounts, the median payment in 2020 was \$1,598.⁵⁰

One example of a wage supplement program is Child Care WAGE\$ which is currently operating in six states. The WAGE\$ model, designed by Child Care Services Association, is administered locally by licensed non-profit organizations in each participating state. The goal of the model is to provide ECE professionals with incentives to achieve higher education levels and to improve retention by increasing compensation.⁵¹ Salary supplements are based on educational level and are dispersed every six months. In 2020, 8,511 directors, teachers, and home-based child care providers received WAGE\$ salary supplements, averaging \$791 per payment.⁵² Child Care WAGE\$ reports that 61 percent of people receiving supplements in 2020 achieved an associate degree or higher.⁵³

Another example of a wage supplement program is Minnesota's R.E.E.T.A.I.N. (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) initiative. As the name suggests, the goal of this initiative is to promote retention and reduce turnover among Minnesota's ECE workforce. Early care and education professionals must apply to receive a bonus, and their applications are scored on several criteria. Preference is given to applicants who receive lower wages, work with infants and toddlers, and have not received the bonus before. In 2018, about half of all applicants received an annual bonus and the average award amount was \$2,357.⁵⁴ Yearly, awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,000, depending on education level.⁵⁵ There are no restrictions on how ECE professionals can spend their bonus; however, most recipients (75%) used their bonus to purchase classroom resources. More than half of recipients reported that the monies positively influenced their decision to stay in the field.⁵⁶

While individual tax credit policies and wage supplement programs have reported positive outcomes, such as lower turnover rates and greater levels of educational attainment, their ability to address the broader compensation issues of the ECE workforce is limited. The amount of the credits and supplements vary but are generally not enough on their own to offset the low wages experienced by many ECE professionals. The eligibility criteria, which prioritize and reward recipients in ECE settings connected to formal systems like QRIS or those with greater educational attainment, are another limitation of these initiatives. For instance, while rewarding educational attainment is intended to incentivize the professional development of the ECE workforce, it may also inadvertently exacerbate existing inequities for minoritized educators and educators of color — who typically work in lower quality settings and who also face greater barriers to accessing educational and training opportunities.⁵⁷ Though tax credit policies and wage supplement programs may provide financial relief to those who receive them, they do not represent a sustainable, equitable, or long-term solution to ECE compensation issues.

Compensation Parity

Compensation parity is a strategy whereby ECE professionals with equivalent levels of education and experience receive salary and benefits on par with elementary educators (most often, K-3 teachers).⁵⁸ In recent years, local and state initiatives have worked to align compensation for individuals working in ECE — especially those employed as teachers in state-funded pre-K classrooms. In some cases, parity focuses only on wages (salary parity) and does not address benefits. To date, most compensation and salary parity policies include only pre-K teachers working in public school settings with only a small number of policies addressing compensation parity for ECE professionals in publicly funded, community-based settings. No policies address compensation parity for ECE professionals with similar qualifications (e.g., bachelor’s degrees or higher) who work outside of publicly funded programs.⁵⁹



Alabama is one of the few states that requires pre-K educators’ starting salary and salary schedule to align with that of the K-12 workforce, regardless of whether the educator works in a private, community-based, or public school setting. The state’s push toward salary parity was driven by a concern that pay disparities between community-based ECE centers and school settings were driving turnover and instability in community-based settings.⁶⁰ Child Trends’ conversations with teachers, program directors, and officials with the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education revealed that the salary parity policy has produced an increased interest among teachers in working in ECE, and thus may be a useful strategy for increasing workforce retention (and recruitment).⁶¹

While these parity policies are successful at making compensation more equitable among pre-K and early elementary school professionals with similar qualifications, the number of people impacted is only a small fraction of the overall workforce. Many locales, states, and Tribal Nations do not have parity policies and in 2012, only 36 percent of center-based providers and 16 percent of home-based providers had a bachelor’s degree or higher.^{d,62} Compensation policies tied directly to levels of educational attainment hold promise but in order to be effective, will require additional attention not just wages but also benefits. Ways for ECE professionals to access and pay for higher education will also need further exploration.

^d Preliminary files for the 2019 NSECE were released beginning in 2020 and additional analysis will be helpful for better understanding degree receipt among the ECE workforce, including how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected the education of ECE professionals.

Minimum Wage Increases

Raising the federal and state minimum wage is a popular policy solution for increasing the standard of living for workers across industries, including in the ECE field. The federal minimum wage has remained at \$7.25/hour since 2009, and many states and local jurisdictions have responded to this stagnation by enacting their own minimum wage increases.⁶³ Currently, 29 states and Washington, D.C. have minimum wages above the federal rate, with California and D.C. offering the highest at \$14 and \$15, respectively.⁶⁴

As many ECE professionals earn less than the newly proposed federal minimum wage increase of \$15/hour, an increase could be an effective way to address low ECE compensation. Projections estimate that more than 44 percent of child care workers would benefit from a minimum wage increase to \$15/hour, the largest proportion of any industry. Studies have shown that the vast majority (95%) of the workers who would benefit are women, and 36 percent are Black or Hispanic. Because of



compensation disparities, Black and Hispanic workers would also get larger pay increases than White workers which could help to decrease racial wage gaps in the field.⁶⁵

Increases in state minimum wages may also be correlated with wage growth for ECE workers. Between 2015 to 2017, states with no minimum wage increase saw an increase of less than 1 percent in child care worker wages, compared with an average 6 percent increase among states with a minimum wage increase.⁶⁶ A potentially concerning factor for ECE professionals located in the south.

Despite the potential to increase workers' wages over time, minimum wage increases should not be considered a stand-alone solution. Minimum wage hikes benefit only the lowest paid ECE workers and thus do not address the need for increased wages among those who earn above the minimum wage but are still underpaid.⁶⁷ A minimum wage increase to \$15/hour is also still lower than the living wage in many places, especially for ECE professionals with children, and thus does not offer the financial stability the workforce deserves.

System Spotlight: U.S. Military¹

The U.S. military's early care and education (ECE) system illustrates that it is possible to adequately compensate the ECE workforce without placing the cost burden on the families. Enlisted parents who enroll their children in a child development center will pay at most only 10 percent of her income. In fact, all families who qualify for military-based ECE receive a subsidy based on income, not their rank or the age of the child. In 2013, government funding covered around two-thirds of the cost of ECE services.

The military ECE structure also benefits providers. Staff are paid higher average rates than private sector ECE workers, and annual wages rise each year. Additionally, providers are expected to pursue professional development opportunities which are directly tied to salary increases. As a result, staff turnover is low, and ECE professionals work in an atmosphere of continuous learning.

¹ Covert, B. (2017). The U.S. already has a high-quality, universal childcare program—in the military. *ThinkProgress*.

^e It is notable that states with no minimum wage requirement are located in the south--Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee. Georgia and Wyoming, have a minimum wage below \$7.25/hour. In each of these states, the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour applies. Source: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx>

Additionally, given the unique structure of the ECE system in which labor accounts for most production costs, providers have historically needed to raise child care fees to afford an increase in minimum wage. This in turn exacerbates inequalities in access to care among families, many of whom already struggle to pay the out-of-pocket costs for high-quality child care. It also disadvantages ECE professionals with infants and young children. Current Population Survey data indicate that ECE professionals working in preschool settings would need to spend more than one-third of their wages to put one child in infant care in over half of U.S. states and the District of Columbia (D.C.), and those working in other types of ECE settings must spend at least 30 percent of their wages to put one child in infant care in all states and D.C.⁶⁸ To ensure increased labor costs do not place undue burden on families and the ECE workforce, policymakers will need to couple minimum wage increases for the ECE workforce with additional policies or new funding mechanisms.

Preparation of the Early Care and Education Workforce

A growing body of research shows the importance of consistent, high-quality learning experiences for the healthy development of young children.⁶⁹ However, because of fragmentation in the ECE system, there are no cohesive or consistent expectations for the qualifications or credentials of those caring for and educating these children. Today, minimum qualifications vary widely by state. No states require center-based lead teachers (outside of public pre-K programs) to have a bachelor's degree, and few states have any minimum requirements for home-based ECE professionals.⁷⁰

Current Context for Enhancing Early Care and Education Workforce Preparation

Increased attention has been paid to the importance of the preparation and qualifications of the ECE workforce in recent years, which is being and has been reflected in policies and funding decisions related to these individuals. This attention has included calls for increasing minimum educational requirements for the ECE workforce. While this shift in sentiment is encouraging in the sense that the public increasingly recognizes the skill needed to provide high-quality ECE services, it also obscures the historic and structural reasons behind the low minimum qualifications that currently exist for most of the workforce. The lack of rigorous qualifications for early educators reflects a fragmented and underfunded system based on centuries of public perception that providing care and education for young children is not a skilled profession and that those who provide it — including women who are minoritized and women of color — are not deserving of adequate compensation.

In the following section, we describe challenges to preparing the ECE workforce and then review their current qualifications and the systems that prepare them. Then, we share examples of policy and program solutions that have been implemented or tested to address preparation, identifying successful outcomes and significant limitations.

Challenges to Preparing the Early Care and Education Workforce

The educational attainment of individuals in the ECE workforce varies by setting. More than half of center-based professionals and nearly one third of home-based professionals have an associate or bachelor's degree, and even more have completed some college credits (28% of center-based professionals and 34%



of home-based professionals).⁷¹ Educational attainment also varies by race and ethnicity. White students enroll in and complete degree programs at higher rates than Native American, Black, or Hispanic students, and they are less likely to take on student loan debt.^{72, 73} These disparities reflect inequalities in the U.S. education system that have existed for centuries, including formal policies and de facto discrimination that resulted in segregating people who are minoritized and people of color into educational institutions that were separate and funded unequally, which reinforced and perpetuated White privilege.^{74,75} This remains a contemporary issue; schools today that serve greater numbers of minoritized students and students of color have significantly fewer resources — both in K-12 and post-secondary education.^{76,77} This type of systemic racism has a long-lasting impact. For example, historical trauma and psychological scars from these practices have created distrust toward U.S.

educational systems among people who have been minoritized and people of color.^{78,79} In addition, disparities in access to educational opportunities in K-12 education impact access to post-secondary opportunities, which in turn influence inequalities in the labor market.⁸⁰

Inconsistent Accessibility, Affordability, and Quality of Early Care and Education Credentials and Degrees

The credential and degree programs currently available to ECE professionals reflect the inconsistencies in educational requirements throughout the field. Depending on position (e.g., lead teacher, assistant teacher, home-based provider) and ages of children served, requirements vary widely within and between states. There are also no cohesive or consistent standards or expectations for programs that prepare early educators.⁸¹ While most states have adopted their own set of workforce competencies for providers, fewer than half of states have aligned the curriculum of their early childhood degree programs with these competencies.⁸²

Current and prospective ECE professionals face significant barriers to accessing and affording quality educational opportunities. In their *Power to the Profession* advocacy work, NAEYC refers to this problem as the “three-legged stool” — where access, affordability, and quality have been nearly impossible for institutes of higher education to balance simultaneously, especially for minoritized students and students of color.⁸³

Accessibility includes several key elements, including clearly defined pathways and available supports for prospective ECE professionals. Many do not start their careers by enrolling in four-year degree programs;

instead, they seek out non-degree certificates or credentials (e.g., CDA or state-specific certificates) or two-year degree programs. However, many states and institutions do not have policies or practice guidelines that allow students to transfer credits,⁸⁴ which limits the utility of these previous educational experiences.

Additionally, many programs do not have adequate supports in place to help students complete degree programs, which is especially true for dual language learners as well as first generation and working students.⁸⁵ Because many ECE students take non-traditional pathways to pursue higher education, they often enter the workforce before enrolling in a degree program. For this reason, they may need additional support—mentorship, advising, cohort models, or flexible class schedules⁸⁶— to navigate the complexities of higher education, including admissions requirements. These types of supports are especially important for students who are minoritized and students of color, who are more likely to encounter barriers to completing degrees, including the difficulties of being in environments that may not reflect or respect their culture or lived experience.⁸⁷



In addition to accessibility, the affordability of higher education also remains a significant challenge. Given the low wages in the field, ECE workers are often unable to afford the cost of attending a two- or four-year degree program.⁸⁸ Moreover, the lack of increased monies for those who do complete a degree may serve as a further deterrent. Individuals graduating from college with a degree in early childhood education have the lowest predicted earnings of all college graduates,⁸⁹ and continue to earn low wages despite increasing their education levels.⁹⁰

Lack of Diversity and Race Equity in Preparation Programs

Several reports have documented the lack of diversity among faculty in ECE preparation programs. While the workforce more closely reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the children and families they serve, higher education faculty do not: More than one-third of institutes of higher education report having *no* faculty members who are minoritized or of color across all degree programs, and the majority of faculty in early childhood programs are White.^{91, 92} Research has consistently shown the importance of students taking courses with educators of the same race or ethnicity. For example, one study of community college classrooms found that drop-out rates and academic performance were significantly improved among minoritized students and students of color when taught by faculty with similar racial or ethnic characteristics.⁹³

Policies and Programs to Address Early Care and Education Workforce Preparation

Scholarships and Loan Forgiveness

Scholarships are financial supports that help students afford the cost of continuing education and degree programs. Loan forgiveness programs help qualified individuals pay down student loans in exchange for completing a certain number of years of service in a qualified setting (in the case of ECE, most commonly,

a low-income school). Currently, federal loan forgiveness is available only to licensed ECE professionals employed by public school systems.⁹⁴

Most states offer scholarship programs for the workforce. In 2021, 21 states administered scholarships through the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood Scholarship program. This program originated in North Carolina, and it provides early educators with a combination of scholarship funds for higher education (including credentials, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees), counseling supports, and wage increases based on credit completion and job retention. T.E.A.C.H. programs in each state are funded through a combination of public funds — some through the quality set-aside in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) — and contributions from employers and educators.^{95, 96}

While scholarships provide financial relief for those who receive them, scholarship programs are generally underfunded and limited in their reach.⁹⁷ Much like the wage supplement programs described earlier, scholarships do not fundamentally alter the structure or financing of higher education. Also, because of their limited reach, scholarships may further stratify the ECE workforce, providing increased access to educational opportunities and the rewards that come with them for some, but not all of future ECE professionals.



Career Pathways

Career pathways provide career advancement through a progression of trainings and credentials that reflect progressively higher competencies and are tied to roles or job titles.⁹⁸ Career pathways offer flexible opportunities for education and training for a variety of learners, such as immigrants, dual language learners, and individuals with disabilities⁹⁹ and are considered a key strategy to help states and programs support professional learning, practice, and compensation for ECE workers by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.¹⁰⁰

One critical feature of career pathways are stackable credentials, which are a sequence of credentials that build on prior knowledge and competencies that can build an individual's portfolio of qualifications and help them move along a career pathway.¹⁰¹ Stackable credentials give the ECE workforce educational flexibility by letting them move from shorter-term certificate programs to longer-term degree programs. The state of Washington provides ECE professionals clear pathways to follow by aligning statewide college courses and student outcomes with the Washington State Core Competencies for ECE Professionals.¹⁰²

Varying terminology, roles, credentials, and resources across the ECE field and states make it difficult to create a comprehensive and validated national career pathways model. For example, while Head Start and other federally funded programs have consistent, national requirements, each state has its own unique set of staff requirements for its public ECE programs. Similarly, each state also has its own accreditation process. This may result in workers' credentials not being recognized by or useable in other states. Thus, in addition to credentials being stackable, states must work together to ensure that credentials are portable, which would allow ECE workers to move across roles, settings, and states without losing their credentials.¹⁰³

To that end, states must closely coordinate with one another to create shared expectations for the ECE workforces' knowledge base, skills, and credentials. As was done in Washington, states should revise their ECE standards to ensure that their teaching requirements and qualifications align with a clearly articulated set of core competencies.

Apprenticeship Programs

Many industries have developed apprenticeship programs to recruit, train, and retain skilled employees combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training. In recent years, several states have adopted ECE apprenticeship programs to address workforce shortages and advance the qualifications of the existing workforce.¹⁰⁴ Currently, 20 states have at least one apprenticeship program for early educators,¹⁰⁵ the majority of which are Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) through the U.S. Department of Labor.^f

The Pennsylvania Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program is one example of an early childhood RAP. Beginning as a citywide initiative in Philadelphia, the goal of this program was to address the needs of nontraditional students employed in ECE settings, providing tailored supports to help them obtain an associate degree through a combination of classroom- and job-based experiences. For example, students have access to college prep courses and personalized advising to meet admissions requirements, and the general education requirements are offered in a contextualized learning format that includes examples and activities applicable to ECE.¹⁰⁶ In addition to receiving credits for completed courses, apprentices receive up to nine transfer credits for having a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and an additional nine credits after they complete a required number of hours of on-the-job learning supported by on-site coaches. After each year, apprentices receive a small wage increase funded through T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.¹⁰⁷

Apprenticeship programs, such as the Pennsylvania model, offer an innovative way to prepare the workforce. Unlike other initiatives that provide only financial supports, apprenticeships acknowledge work experience and help address some of the biggest barriers to seeking higher education (e.g., academic supports, contextualized learning). However, these apprenticeship programs have a limited reach; the first cohort of the Pennsylvania RAP included only 33 apprentices. Without a more robust and dedicated funding stream, successful programs like this cannot expand and make large-scale changes across the field.

Summary

Calls from policymakers, advocates, and funders to increase the required qualifications of the ECE workforce, though well-intentioned, often neglect to consider the structural barriers that have prevented many ECE professionals, especially women who are minoritized and women of color, from accessing educational opportunities. Increasing the qualifications of the ECE workforce must first involve recognizing the systemic racism that has contributed to unequal access to educational opportunities. Increasing educational requirements and tying these requirements to compensation — without removing access barriers and providing dedicated supports to early educators — will only serve to reinforce and perpetuate existing inequalities.

Recommendations

Achieving ample and equitable compensation and access to opportunity in the ECE field is a worthy goal. Addressing the ways that structural racism and sexism affect these issues, however, will be a challenging

^f The RAP is a specific model for apprenticeship programs. RAPs are validated by and registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. In 2019, there were more than 25,000 RAPs in the U.S. For more information, see: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program>

and long-term endeavor that will require changes in policy, existing power relations, and predominant cultural hierarchies.

As this white paper outlines, dealing with the root causes of discrimination and racism that women, women who are minoritized, and women of color face in the ECE labor market is core to this work. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet to resolve the root causes of colonization, racism, sexism, and discrimination that are so deeply embedded in our society. Therefore, we recommend a multifaceted approach directed at different levels and involving multiple players. An integrated approach has the most potential to enhance the public's and the profession's valuation of ECE and to create equality of opportunity and compensation in employment. Importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a critical window of opportunity to build on government action, funding, and shifts in public sentiment regarding the need for and value of ECE services as an essential sector and component of our nation's infrastructure.



The following bullets are considerations that federal, state, and local policymakers, advocates, and philanthropy should consider as they advance strategies and solutions to strengthen the ECE workforce. These recommendations are based on the content presented in this white paper and its companion landscape scan, and answer the key question posed for the commission of work: How can racial equity be centered in policy and advocacy to support the compensation, preparation, and stability of the ECE workforce?

- **Strategies must consider systemic barriers and create systemic changes.** This requires acknowledging that barriers and inequities exist within structures and institutions and not individuals. Addressing the systemic racism experienced by the ECE workforce will require attention to inequities in the system that support the profession, including decolonization and anti-racism approaches. Policy solutions with limited reach (e.g., wage supplements, tax credits) do not adequately address the root causes of compensation or preparation challenges across the ECE system and instead may serve to further entrench White privilege. Similarly, policies that are not responsive to the realities of the workforce will fail to promote equity. As some of the examples in this white paper illustrate, strategies with good intentions miss the mark because historical antecedents and root causes have not been addressed, and there has been a lack of acknowledgment of and attention to the “on the ground” lived experiences of ECE professionals who face these barriers.
- **A diverse range of ECE professionals and the families they serve must be part of the policymaking process.** Implicit in the preceding recommendation is the reality that policies are likely to have the greatest utility when they include the voices of those they impact in significant and meaningful ways. As the landscape scan illustrates, advocacy, organizing, and using civic processes have been successful in incrementally moving the field forward. The history of these activities, however, reveals that policies that are “gender friendly” are not always “race friendly.” Policy makers will need to hear directly from ECE professionals and families to understand these tensions and any potential unanticipated consequences of policies designed to be supportive. Philanthropy could play a key role by funding research and advocacy efforts that bring the ECE sector together to better understand the range of circumstances and issues related to workforce compensation and preparation.

- **Draw on the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate policy changes in ECE.** Policies tend to reflect the public's perceptions about key issues and as such can be used as a catalyst for change. For centuries, public attitudes about the value of ECE —

and who provides it — have influenced the creation and continuation of colonial, racist, and sexist policies. In turn, these policies have been entrenched and have codified the inequalities experienced by the ECE workforce. The expedient and recent passing of stimulus bills to support the American public during



the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that policy changes can occur quickly when there is a unifying sense of urgency in the country. Moreover, as the landscape scan details, the government's role in funding and supporting the provision of universal child care during World War II and our military child care system not only illustrates the expediency by which policies can change, but also shows that it is possible to have a well-funded ECE system that appropriately compensates the professionals working in it, including those who are minoritized and of color. Depending on one's orientation, discussions related to ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic have primarily been framed as an economic recovery issue, a family or social safety net issue, an infrastructure issue, or some combination of the three. Regardless of the framing, the underlying sentiment is that ECE is critical, but the current system is not meeting the needs of the public. This common viewpoint, from such a wide swatch of people of differing orientations, races/ethnicities, socioeconomic strata, etc. can be used as a catalyst for shaping ECE policy reform, including issues related to equity in compensation and preparation.

- **Public investment is needed to support policy, infrastructure, and oversight issues.** Even with public support, advancing policy to increase compensation or strengthen the preparation of the ECE workforce will have little chance of success unless policies are accompanied by significant and sustainable public funding. Stimulus legislation such as the American Jobs Plan¹⁰⁸ is a good first step; however, the Plan does not include previously touted provisions to increase the compensation of ECE professionals.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, while a good first step toward increasing public funding for ECE, these allocations have been made in response to a crisis. Taking a step back to proactively examine systems and infrastructure is also important and necessary to develop a cohesive infrastructure for public investments in ECE.
- **Oversight and monitoring of the use of federal dollars by locales and states is needed.** While locales and states do allocate monies to ECE, they also receive federal (and other) monies for the ECE sector. Decisions regarding how these dollars are spent are largely left to states, which can result in piecemeal and fragmented ECE systems, making it challenging to assess and remediate issues related to equitable compensation and preparation. As the landscape scan details, states have often not been good stewards of funding in terms of racial equity. Therefore, oversight

mechanisms in the form of unions, committees, or other governing bodies may be important for advancing equity issues in compensation and preparation.

- **Draw on existing efforts to advance racial equity to inform equity in compensation and preparation approaches.** America has made slow progress on issues related to racism, sexism, and compensation equity. This issue raises a fundamental question: How can we value the work of



women who are minoritized, women of color, and women more generally given this resistance to change? As the landscape scan details, federal policy has been an important lever in advancing issues related to race and compensation. President Biden's Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government supports the use of "equity assessments" to understand whether and how policies further systemic racism.¹¹⁰ Attention to how these assessments are being implemented, and what they reveal can help inform policies and systems that facilitate equitable compensation and preparation in ECE.

- **Build on already existing initiatives and efforts underway such as free college, scholarships, and loan forgiveness.** For example, Bright Horizons Family Solutions, one of the largest child care providers in the U.S. launched a tuition assistance program for employees interested in pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education. School fees and textbooks are also covered, and salary increases for those who complete the degree programs are given too.¹¹¹ The four colleges and universities with whom they partner all have online degree programs, which helps to meet the needs of ECE professionals who are already working and/or who have busy schedules. To help facilitate successful program completion, Bright Horizons also trains center directors to help their staff manage the demands of work and school, and they assign an educational adviser to each student to help them navigate potential barriers to degree completion. For instance, advisors provide support around course credits and degree pathways.¹¹²
- **Consider policy strategies and solutions, like reparations, to facilitate home ownership for ECE professionals who are minoritized or from communities of color.** As the landscape scan illustrates, the U.S. has a long history of resource theft and exclusionary housing policies. These policies began with the founding of the country and have persisted through centuries of land theft, kidnapping, slavery, sharecropping, the Dawes Act, Jim Crow and Black laws, redlining, and predatory lending. The landscape scan, also indicates that historically Black women have used home-based employment, including child care as a way to not only help the families and children in their communities, but to gain a sense of agency and resist racially oppressive and sexist systems designed to limit their progress. Policy strategies and solutions such as reparations, low interest loans, or down payment assistance programs can help ECE professionals who are minoritized or of color to pay off mortgages or facilitate access to home buying opportunities, an indirect compensation booster and preparation facilitator for those who provide or who are interested in home-based child care. For instance, home ownership can result in income generating tax breaks and building of equity that translates into more household dollars. It can also facilitate access to better educational opportunities including higher education.¹¹³ Consideration of these types of strategies and solutions have the potential to support long-term stabilization for current (or potential) home-based child care providers, many of whom are minoritized women or women of color.
- **Monitor policy implementation to ensure policies do not replicate or reinforce existing inequities.** Many of the policy strategies and solutions that have been advanced to address compensation and preparation have not been implemented equitably. In addition, compensation

and preparation challenges are not experienced equally by all ECE professionals. Any proposed strategies or solutions must consider the diverse lived experiences of the workforce. For instance, initiatives to increase compensation may need to vary for center- and home-based educators. Native American students may need different academic supports to complete their degrees than Black or Hispanic students. Building opportunities for monitoring, including feedback loops to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of policies, is important.

Considerations include whether:

- The wide range of values held by members of the ECE community are represented;
- Diverse representation and perspectives are part of the policy making process;
- Cultural and historical contexts have been considered and accounted for;
- Key stakeholders, including ECE professionals and the families that use these services, are compensated for the time they invest in informing the policy process;
- Policymakers have been trained on structural racism, colonization, sexism, implicit biases, equity, and how to listen, including how to identify, analyze, and respond to issues to ensure that those impacted by policies feel heard; that proposed solutions incorporate their perspectives and voices; and that unintentional, negative outcomes are identified and addressed.



- **Invest in data to better understand inequities and progress.**

Many locales, states, and organizations lack data and accountability standards to support and promote racial equity in the ECE field. Moreover, an ability to link varied systems (e.g., Head Start, private, community- and home-based child care settings) or data and demographics related to degree and credentialing programs could help to better understand where resources, interventions, and policy development or change may be needed. In short, local data and data systems that are connected at various levels are essential for identifying and addressing disparities, but they are often inadequate or, in terms of connected systems, nonexistent. Finally, there is a need to understand how gaps in research are perpetuated by a lack of data, serving to silence, make invisible, and erase issues related to racial and gender politics and policies. In the ECE field specifically, data that shed light on the history, accomplishments, experiences, challenges, and contemporary lives of Hispanic and Native American populations—including American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander populations—in terms of compensation and preparation are in need of documentation and additional exploration.

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Mary Pauper: A Historical Exploration Early Care and Education Compensation, Policy, and Solutions

Additional Readings



Additional Readings List

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