

CHERISH EVERY CHILD INITIATIVE

CARING FOR SPRINGFIELD'S FUTURE

SPRINGFIELD'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

A summary of data collected by the Workforce Development Working Group

June, 2004

CHERISH EVERY CHILD Initiative

Caring for Springfield's Future

In 1999, the leadership of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation imagined a community that cares for all of its children; a community where every child is safe, healthy, cared for, nurtured, and expertly educated. The leadership wondered aloud, “What would it take for Springfield to become such a community?” and partnered with a group of community and business leaders, child and family advocates, citizens of Springfield, and professionals in the fields of physical, social, emotional and cognitive early childhood development to find the answer. The Cherish Every Child initiative was the succinct response; to become such a community, Springfield must indeed cherish every child.

In the fall of 2002, this group of committed individuals collaborated to develop an overarching plan for meeting the initiative’s goal: to improve the lives of children, birth through eight, and their families. The key approaches would include interventions and improvements, as well as initiatives that could ultimately lead to effective organizational, political and institutional change in the delivery and quality of services to young children and their families. With these key strategies in mind, a Plan for Springfield’s Children recommended eight actions:

- ⇒ Strengthen and coordinate services to families;
- ⇒ Ensure early education and care for all children five and under;
- ⇒ Strengthen the early childhood workforce;
- ⇒ Promote and sustain programs to optimize the health and well-being of young children and their families;
- ⇒ Raise incomes for the families of young children;
- ⇒ Encourage recreational and cultural enrichment;
- ⇒ Establish quality of life indicators for Springfield’s young children and collect and disseminate reliable data on their status; and,
- ⇒ Develop a community awareness campaign.

With these clear recommendations in hand, teams of individuals, called Working Groups were formed to research, design, recommend and implement the initiatives and interventions needed for the recommended actions to take place. As such, the Workforce Development Working Group of the Cherish Every Child initiative was established to address the third recommended action; ***strengthen the early childhood workforce.***

In April 2004, the Working Group developed a profile of the existing early childhood workforce in Springfield. Found herein are the data summaries, findings, and guiding narratives of this project and responses to the initiative's recommendation.

A Team Perspective

The Workforce Development Working Group of the Cherish Every Child initiative is a small, albeit determined constituency. The intended outcome of this project was to produce a profile of Springfield's early childhood workforce. To this group, having an accurate workforce profile meant that future strategies to strengthen the workforce would be guided by informed decisions, rather than well intended guesswork. A workforce profile would allow training entities and post-secondary institutions to strategically design and offer programs based on primary information, documented needs, and the recommendations made in this report. Knowing that the profile would be the first step toward strengthening the workforce, the idea of creating such a profile generated the enthusiasm and energy needed to complete the task.

The Working Group would like to acknowledge and thank Ben Rodriguez, the Program Coordinator of the Cherish Every Child initiative, for his support and management of the working group activities. The Working Group also thanks Mary Walachy, Executive Director of the Davis Foundation for her contributions to the project design, and for the focus and direction she provided. The Preschool Enrichment Team, (professional consultants for this project) deserve special thanks for being consistently available to oversee data collection and analysis, and providing technical assistance for this project.

Finally, the Working Group would like to express its appreciation to the YMCA of Greater Springfield for providing incentives to survey participants, and Springfield Technical Community College for hosting a gathering to share this important project with members of the community.

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Translations of correspondence and surveys were prepared by Najhat Fayhad Translation Services. Jill Martel served as the computer consultant for this project.

Springfield's Early Childhood Workforce

The Project

In the fall of 2002, the Cherish Every Child Initiative developed a strategic plan, which recommended eight actions that could be taken to ensure that every young child in Springfield has access to and receives the highest quality care and education possible. One recommendation, *strengthen the early childhood workforce*, became the focus of the Workforce Development Working Group. To meet that objective, its members determined that a profile of Springfield's existing early childhood workforce would provide the frameworks for improving quality of care and education, by identifying gaps in its training and education. Research concerning existing training and educational opportunities would be synthesized along with the data collected to develop the workforce profile. With clear and accurate information about its early childhood workforce, Springfield could begin to strategically design interventions and initiatives to strengthen it. This would move Springfield a single, but important step closer to becoming a community that truly cherishes its children and honors all of its families.

The Working Group determined that data would be collected for two separate but related projects; one project would produce a profile of the existing workforce and the other would become a professional development resource. Relevant workforce data concerning salaries, educational attainment, requirements, goals and objectives of employees and agencies, staff turnover, staffing patterns, and barriers to education and training were collected throughout the late fall of 2003 into the winter of 2004. These data were used to create a workforce profile, presented in this report. A separate data collection in fall, 2003 yielded information concerning existing and proposed sources and strategies for professional development, defined in broadest terms. Data concerning professional development included but were not limited to costs, content, quality, participant eligibility, and participant profiles and were used to create a directory of training entities and inventory of services and programs. The directory, a second report of the Working Group, was prepared by the Preschool Enrichment Team, professional consultant for both projects.

The Working Group identified the following project objectives:

- *to create an accurate profile of the early childhood workforce in Springfield.*
- *to analyze existing and anticipated needs of the workforce.*

- *to identify needs and trends in employment and compensation, gaps in training, and barriers to continuing education or professional development, which may require new and innovative responses.*
- *to structure an equitable and accessible system for improving and increasing the training and education of the workforce.*

At its conclusion, the complete data collection yielded the desired results; it provided information about the workforce and the entities available to train and support it.

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Introduction and Background

In the fall of 2002, the Davis Foundation's Cherish Every Child Initiative released a strategic plan for improving the lives of young children in Springfield. *Strengthen the Early Childhood Workforce* was one of eight recommendations made by its leadership to bring Springfield closer to becoming a community, "...where every family is embraced and every child is cherished". The Workforce Development Working Group determined that in order to proceed, a baseline of information about the early childhood workforce in Springfield would be needed. It recommended two surveys: one to determine the educational, demographic and economic characteristics of the workforce, and the other to determine training and professional development assets available in the community.

The Preschool Enrichment Team (P.E.T.), a non-profit childcare resource and referral agency located in Springfield, was engaged to provide professional consulting services for both surveys. This report pertains to the first survey, that of the educational background, economic status and demographics of Springfield's early care and education workforce. P.E.T.'s charge was to create and distribute the survey, develop a database, compile and collate the results, and prepare a report.

Project Overview

The goal of the project was to create a detailed profile of the current early childhood care and education workforce in Springfield, including family childcare, center-based child care and Head Start. This information would then be used by the Workforce Development Working Group as background information to develop and recommend strategies to strengthen the workforce.

A consultant, experienced in database creation and data management, was hired to assist with survey development and to construct the database used for gathering and reporting data. The Workforce Development Working Group assisted P.E.T. with survey development, distribution, data analysis and preparation of the final report.

Occupational Structure and Trends

The current structure of the workforce in center based programs in Massachusetts is based largely on the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) qualifications and adult/child ratios. OCCS, the licensing body in Massachusetts establishes regulations for Family Child Care, Group Child Care and School Age Child Care. All early care and education programs and licensed family childcare programs (except public schools and religion-based programs) must meet and maintain the licensing standards and requirements established by OCCS. While employees of some centers in the Commonwealth exceed the OCCS educational requirements for staff positions, others meet the requirements at the minimum level. Similarly, some centers operate with maximum allowable ratios of adults to children, while others are staffed to accommodate flexible enrollments.

Staff Qualifications

In Massachusetts, there are no positions in the early care and education system that require a college degree. In the fall of 2003, the Department of Education revised its *Early Childhood Program Standards and Learning Guidelines for Three-and Four-Year Olds* to include new educational requirements for staff in all programs that receive funding through Community Partnerships for Children (CPC), which stipulate that early care and education teachers will have Associate Degrees by the year 2010, and Bachelor Degrees by 2017. Currently, 85% of Springfield's early childhood sites are receiving CPC funds.

The following table represents the minimum OCCS requirement for each position discussed in this report.

Qualifications for Position	Education	Work Experience
Assistant Teacher	* 16 years of age, no certificate issued for this position	
Teacher	3 college credits in Child Growth and Development	9 mos. (<i>High School</i>) 6 mos. (<i>unrelated BA/BS</i>) 3 mos. (<i>with AA or BA/BS in ECE or related field</i>)
Lead Teacher	12 college credits in 4 categories <i>1. Child Dev</i> <i>2. Curriculum</i> <i>3. Early Childhood Topic</i> <i>4. Early Childhood Topic</i>	36 mos. (<i>High School</i>) <i>or</i> 27 mos. (<i>Alternative Training Program, CDA</i>) <i>or</i> 18 mos. (<i>related Associates or unrelated Bachelors</i>) <i>or</i> 9 mos. (<i>Bachelors or higher in ECE or related field</i>)
Director I	Meets Lead Teacher Requirements and has 2 credits or 3 CEU's in Day Care Administration	6 mos. beyond Lead Teacher
Director II	Meets Director I requirements and has 2 additional credits or 3 CEU's.	No additional work experience needed.

The following table represents the minimum OCCS requirements for family child care (FCC) providers:*

Qualifications for FCC License	Education	Experience
Regular license for 6 children	3 hours orientation First Aid/CPR	1 year (other options available)
Regular license for 6 children Renewal (every 3 years)	15 hours OCCS approved childcare training Current First Aid/CPR (Infants/Toddlers)	
FCC Plus License (allows 2 additional school-aged children)	3 hours pre-service school age training and 20 hours at renewal (3 hours Infants/Toddlers 2 hours school age) Current First Aid/CPR, annual renewal on CPR	2 years
Large FCC (10 children with assistant)	5 hours pre-service training and 30 hours training at renewal or 1 college course. Current First Aid/CPR for Infant/Toddler	3 years with regular license

* The FCC System requires additional training for individuals who receive state funding for children in their care. Other Family Child Care systems may require more training as well. For example, the FCC System of the Springfield Day Nursery requires a minimum of 16 hours of training per year and 6-10 hours of in-home orientation, presented by System staff for all of its providers.

Supervising staff, working with parents, monitoring funding sources, completing paper work and managing day to day operations is the responsibility of the center administrator or director. Large agencies may have several people assist with these tasks, while in smaller agencies, directors perform all of the administrative duties. Lead Teachers may qualify and function as administrators, depending on the licensed capacity of the center.

The following table represents the requirements for center administrators:

Licensed Capacity	Hours of Operations Per Day	Required non-teaching administrative time	Administrator Qualifications
1-12	Any number of hours	none	Lead Teacher
13-24	Four or fewer hours	none	Lead Teacher
13-24	Four or more hours including programs with separate AM/PM sessions	none	Director 1
25-39	Four or fewer hours	none	Director 1
25-39	Four or more hours including programs with separate AM/PM sessions	50% of a full time position	Director 1
40-79	Any number of hours	100% of a full time position	Director 1
More than 79	Any number of hours	100% of a full time position	Director 11

Staff/Child Ratios

Staff/child ratios vary, because they are established according to the ages of children and group size. The number of children may not exceed the number specified in staff/child ratios; likewise, the number of staff may not be fewer than established in such ratios for any given group. It is important to note that staff may be teacher qualified and responsible for an entire group of children (with only one college course and 9 months of experience).

The following table represents OCCS established staff/child ratios:

Age Group/ Full or Half Day Program	Maximum Group Size	Teacher/Child Ratio	Teacher Qualifications
Infants (1-mo. -15 mos.)	No larger than 7	1: 3 1 additional teacher or assistant for 4-7 infants	Infant/Toddler Teacher Qualified
Toddlers (15 mos. -2.9 years)	No larger than 9	1:4 1 additional teacher or assistant for 5-9 toddlers	Infant/Toddler Teacher Qualified
Infants and Toddlers (1 mo.-2.9 years)	No larger than 9; no more than 3 infants	1:3 1 additional teacher or assistant for 4-9 infants and toddlers	Infant/Toddler Teacher Qualified
Toddler/Preschooler (15 mos. – 7 years)	No larger than 9 At least one preschooler in group	1:5 1 additional teacher or assistant for 6-9	Infant/Toddler and Preschool Teacher Qualified
Preschool (2.9 – 7 years)	No larger than 20	1:10 1 additional teacher or assistant teacher for 11-20 children	Preschool Teacher Qualified

Statement of the Issues/Questions

Several important assumptions, based on summary reports and other working group projects of the Cherish Every Child initiative, relative to strengthening the workforce influenced the design of this project. One assumption was that the workforce needs improved and increased training and education, coupled with fair compensation to create the conditions under which quality driven programs for children will develop and thrive. A second assumption was that the workforce is not prepared to plan or finance its own professional development in time to meet the new DOE educational standards for early childhood teachers. This could result in an even greater turnover of staff, especially for teachers who may feel overwhelmed by the mandate to earn a college degree. This is particularly troubling because many experienced and highly competent Latinos and African-Americans are represented in Springfield's early childhood workforce, primarily in teacher positions. A third assumption was that there could be many reasons as to why some members of the workforce have not sought higher education. While some individuals may be highly motivated to continue their education, the cost of higher education is prohibitive for many. However, access to higher education is not limited to its affordability; other socioeconomic factors and institutional barriers may prevent some individuals from attending college. A final assumption was that a wide range of training and educational programs and opportunities were available, but not necessarily accessible or relevant to the workforce. These assumptions generated two questions:

1. What is the experience and education of the early childhood workforce in Springfield?
2. What circumstances influence Springfield's workforce participation in higher education and training?

Methodology and Procedures

The initial assumptions, that the early childhood workforce may have gaps in its preparation and face some barriers to higher education guided the project design. The objective was to determine the educational attainment and experiential backgrounds of the existing workforce in a manner that would 1) identify precisely the positions within the occupational structure that require educational support and intervention; 2) identify the nature and availability of existing services to provide such training and education; and, 3) determine patterns or consistencies in educational attainment and experience across positions in the occupational structure.

P.E.T. staff worked with the Workforce Development Working Group to design surveys that would yield information needed to answer the questions posed in this report. Surveys were prepared in English and Spanish. One survey was designed to collect personal and professional data from family childcare and early childhood center-based programs. A separate survey was designed to collect data relative to benefits, (such as health insurance and paid vacations) from center administrators and family childcare providers.

P.E.T. telephoned child care centers in Springfield to determine the number of direct care staff who were employed in the city. The telephone inquiry determined that approximately 550 assistant teachers, teachers, lead teachers and directors work at Springfield's 47 early care and education sites. P.E.T.'s child care information and referral database indicated that there were 272 licensed family childcare providers in Springfield.

Surveys were coded with identifiers to track the return of family childcare surveys and individual center surveys. In September 2003, surveys were mailed to 272 family childcare providers, including 27 in Spanish. P.E.T. staff and members of the Working Group hand-delivered surveys to the 47 centers, and offered brief overviews of the project and its purpose. The 47 center-based packets contained 550 surveys for staff, including teachers, assistant teachers, lead teachers, directors, and assistant directors. As incentive for completing the survey, respondents were entered in a free drawing to win gift certificates to Springfield area restaurants or a three month membership to the Springfield YMCA. Surveys were due back in October 2003. Of the 272 family childcare surveys mailed, 75 were returned. Of the 580 center-based surveys delivered, 343 were returned. Of the total 47 Springfield centers, 42 participated in the survey.

Family Child Care Providers	75/272	28%
Center-Based Staff	342/550	59%
Centers participating	42/47	89%

Winter months were dedicated to development of the database and working toward outcome reporting.

Data Analysis

The data were entered as they were collected by survey responses to four question domains: experience, education, salary and benefits, personal information.

Analysis proceeded as follows:

Content/domain analysis

- Identification of education, years of experience, salary, personal data
- Arrangement of domains by position/response

Characterization/sorting

- Categorizing expected education by occupational structure
- Identifying similarities, patterns by position/domain

Within position/across position

- Recombining data by position
- Comparing and contrasting data across positions

Presentation of Data

Data are presented in two sections. First, graphs that display the experience, education, positions and salaries, and personal characteristics of the workforce are presented, followed by summaries of those findings. Graphs and summaries are followed by a second section, which presents brief narratives that discuss the data by position and domain. The last section of the data presentation revisits the original questions, recombines, and synthesizes the data.

The data are systematically displayed, compared and contrasted to the occupational structure reviewed earlier in this report.

Analysis and Findings

This study reviewed the experience, education, salary and characteristics of the early childhood workforce. More specifically, this project was aimed at determining the educational attainment of members of the workforce and answering two questions:

1. What is the experience and education of the existing early childhood workforce in Springfield?
2. What circumstances influence Springfield's workforce participation in higher education?

Section One: Experience

Chart 1

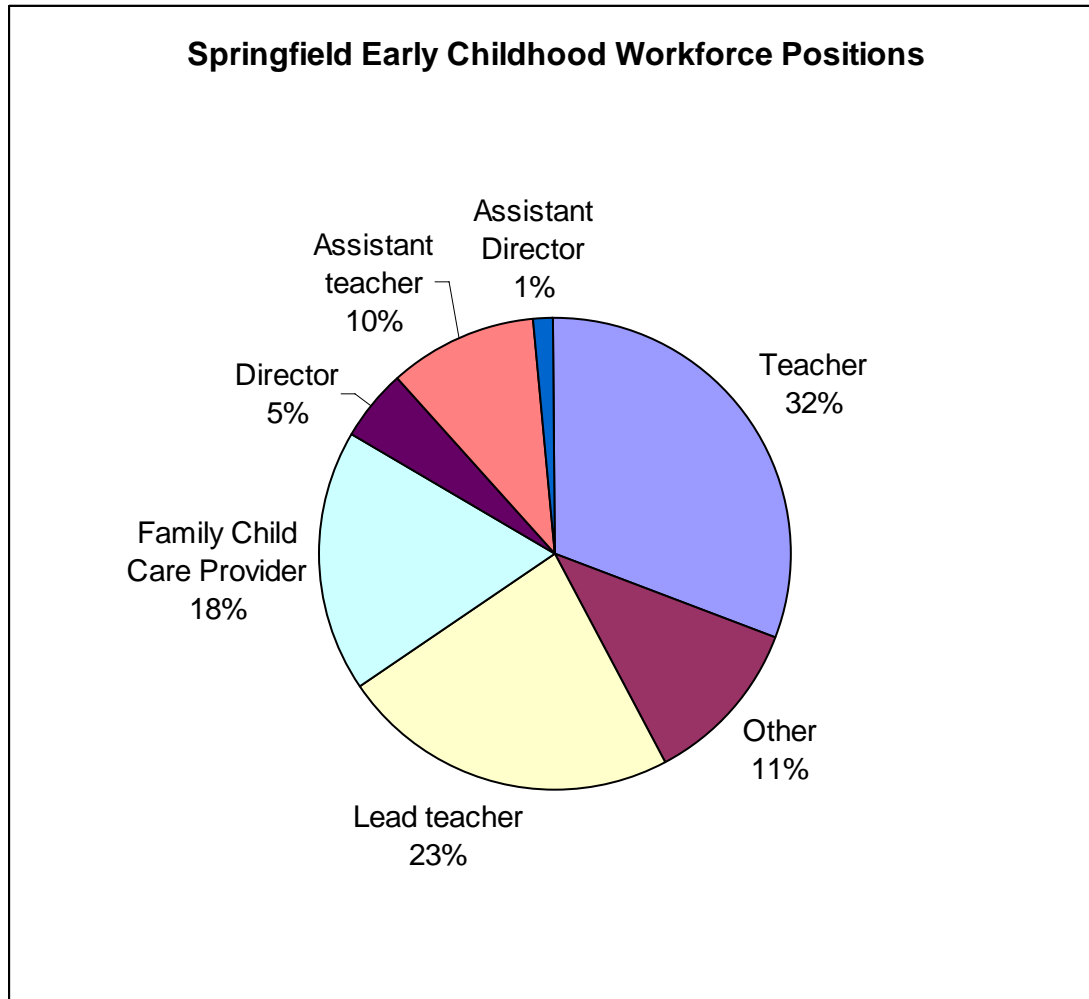


Chart 1 represents the distribution of early childhood positions in Springfield's workforce. The largest percent of positions are held by individuals employed as Teachers. Lead Teachers represent the second largest group. Only 5% of the workforce are employed as directors, while 10% work as Assistant Teachers, a position for which a 16 year old with no educational background or work experience may qualify and for which no OCCS certificate is issued.

Chart 2

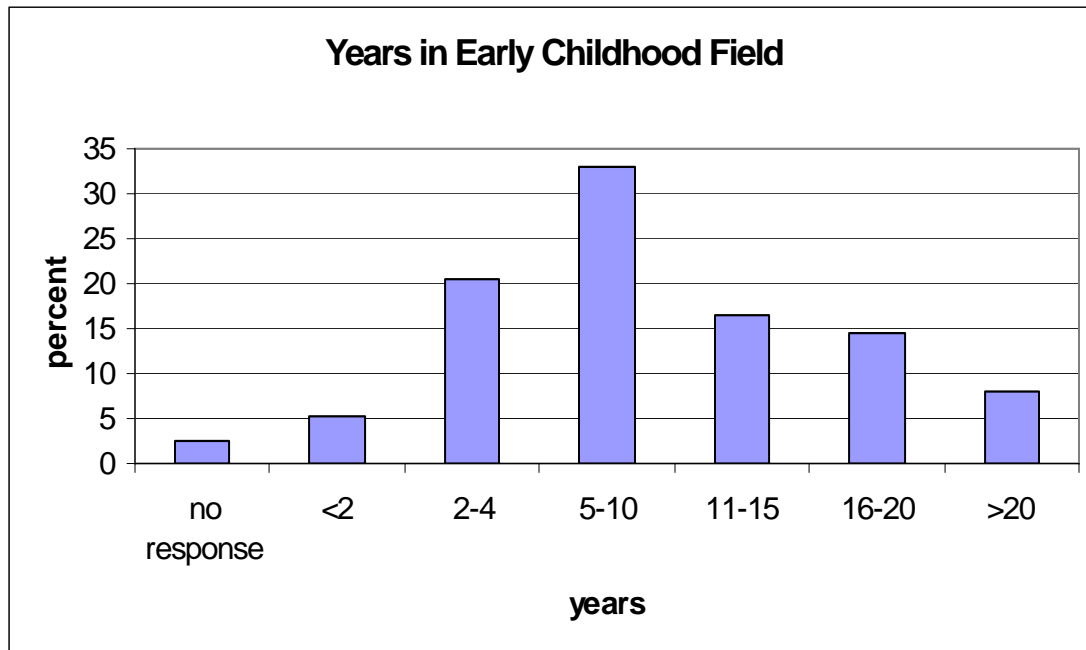


Chart 2 represents the percent distribution of experience in the field of early childhood education by number of years. The total number of surveys distributed was 850, with 272 of those distributed to family childcare providers. The range of experience represented is less than 2 years to greater than 21 years. The chart represents a gradual increase in years of experience to the 5-10 year mark and slightly greater and consistent decreases after 10 years. Although 84% of the workforce has 5 or more years of experience, the peak at the 5-10 year point and gradual decreases in experience (greater than the increases shown with less than 5 years experience) represent a turnover after the 5-10 year point. The two categories with the least experience, when combined represent 25.3% of the workforce as having less than 5 years of experience.

Chart 3

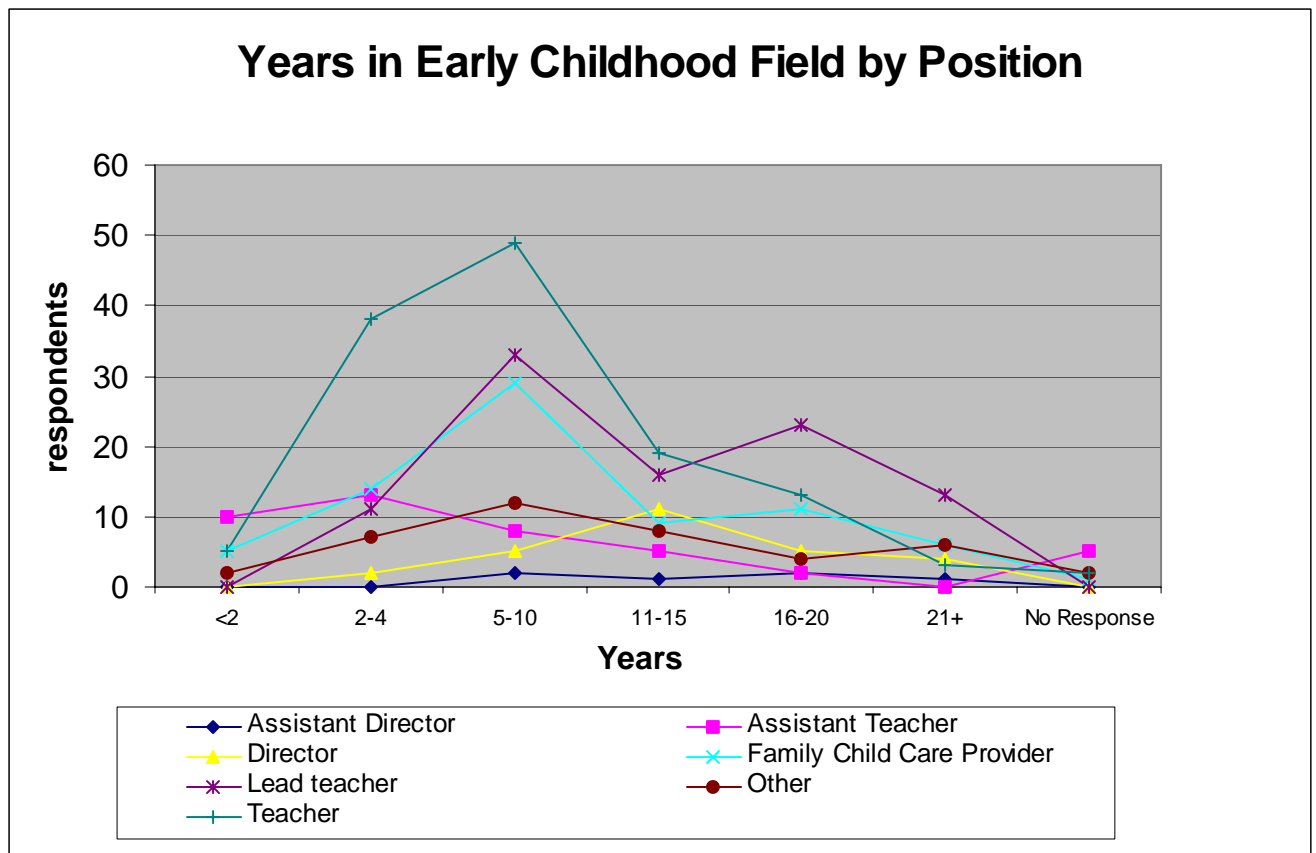


Chart 3 represents the number of years experience by position. “Director” is the only position that does not decline after the 5-10 year period. “Assistant Teachers” at the entry-level position, represent the only group that shows a decrease after the 2-4 year mark. Assistant Teachers are qualified for Teacher certification after only 9 months of experience *and* a college course in Child Development; nevertheless, “Assistant Teachers” remain in that position, for periods greater than 15 years.

Chart 4

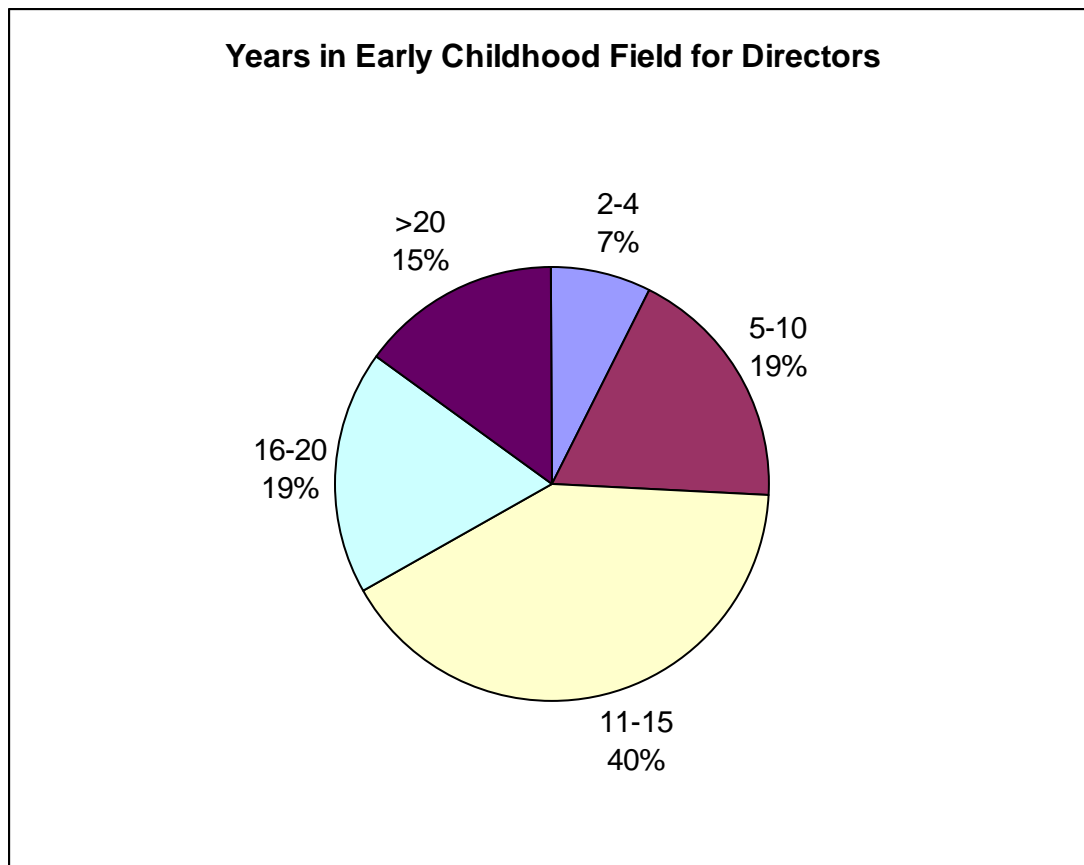


Chart 4 represents the experience of the Directors in the field and a great deal of experience at that level of employment. However, Directors represent the highest position in the occupational structure established by OCCS, with only 5% of the workforce as represented in Chart 1. While >92% have more than 5 years, they represent a relatively small percent of the workforce. Race and ethnicity relative to positions are represented in subsequent charts presented in this section.

Section One: Education

Chart 5

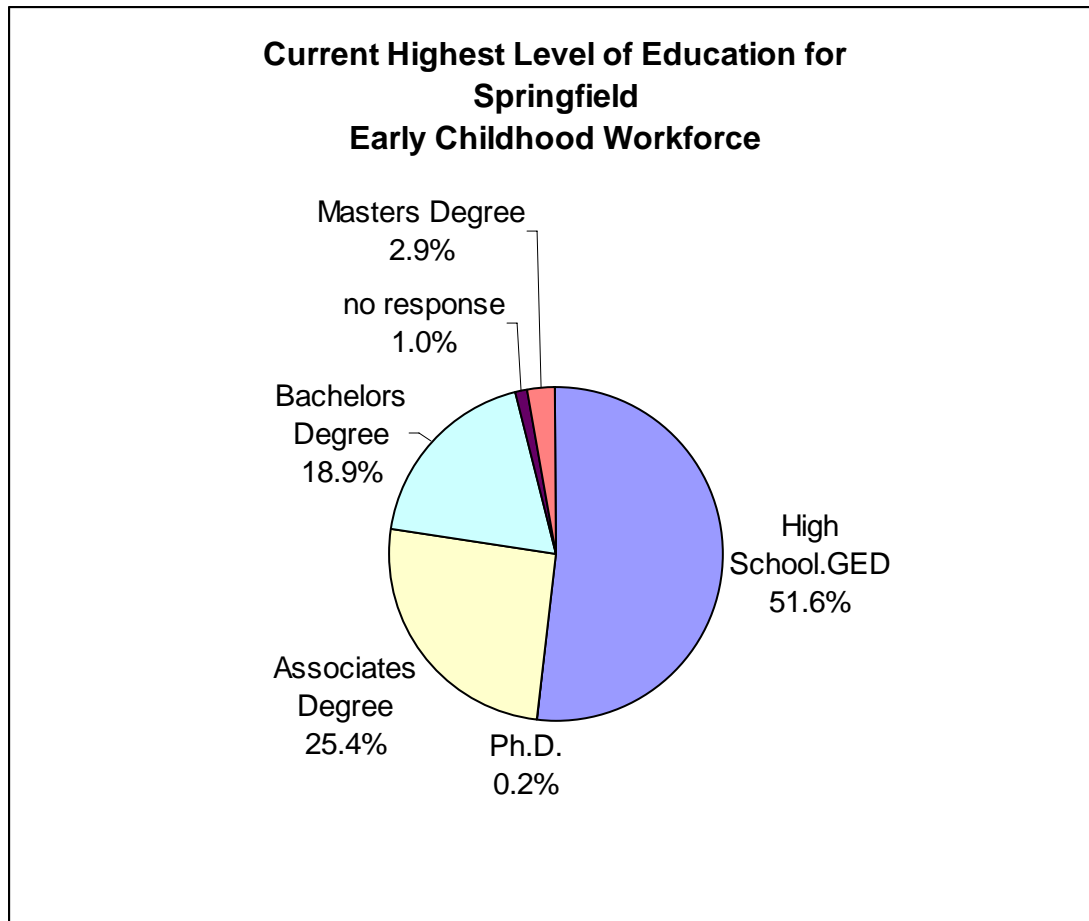


Chart 5 represents the highest levels of education attained by the workforce. Less than ½ of the workforce have education levels higher than HS/GED (51.6%) and educational attainment levels decline at the Associate Degree (AS) level, which represents 25.4% of the workforce. The percents individuals with Associate and Bachelor Degrees combined are less than the percent having HS/GED as its highest level of education.

Chart 6

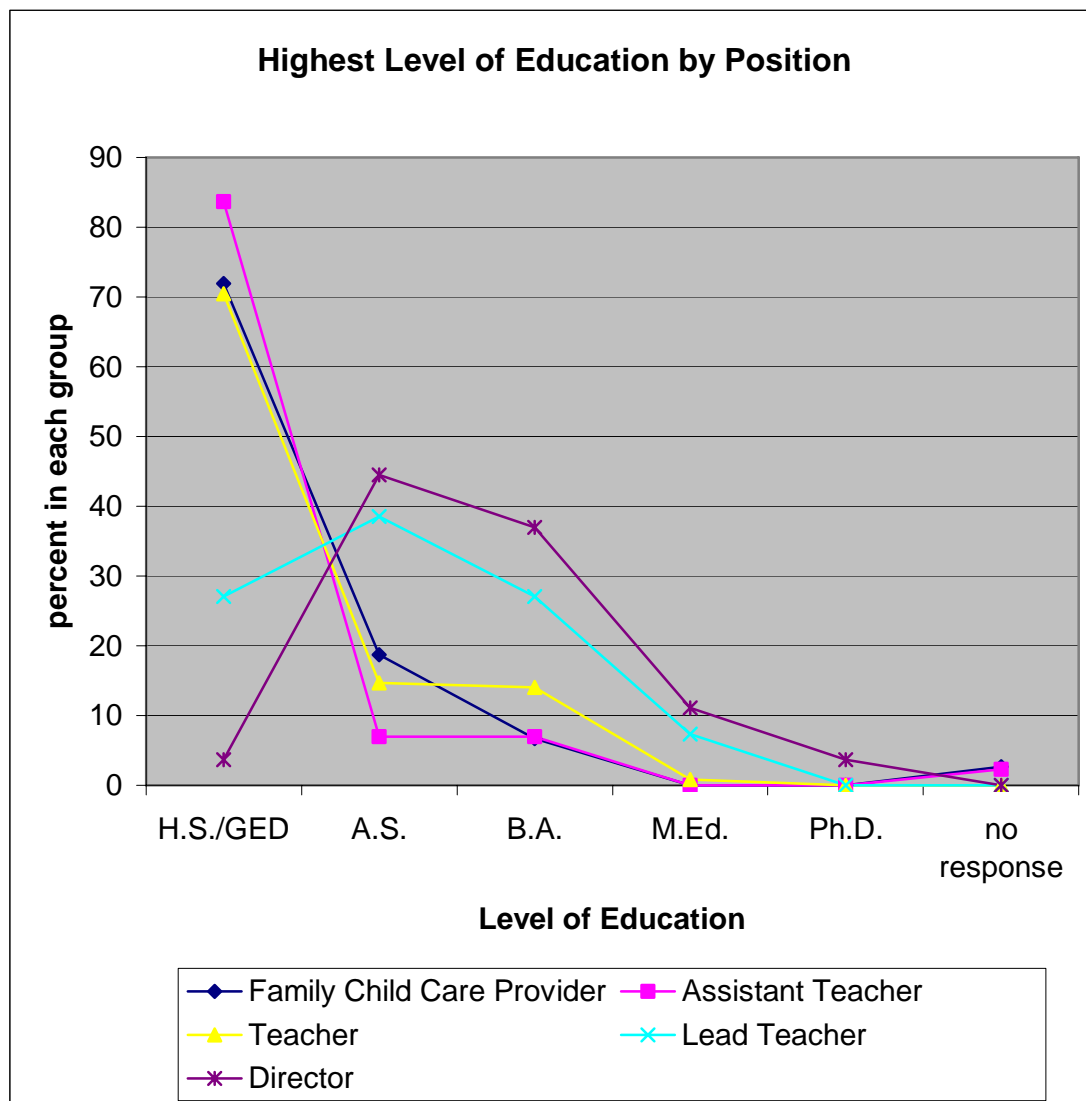


Chart 6 represents the workforce's levels of education by position. The percent of Lead Teachers with HS/GED's (27.1) equals the percent of Lead Teachers with BA degrees. A higher percent of Family Childcare Providers have AS degrees (18.7%) than Assistant Teachers or Teachers. Assistant Teachers, represent the largest group of individuals with HS/GED as its highest level of education. AS degrees and BA degrees each increase 100% from the Assistant to Teacher positions. AS degrees increase 162% and BA degrees increase 94% from the Teacher to Lead Teacher position. Likewise, the percent of AS and BA degrees increase 14.5% and 36% respectively from Lead Teacher to the Director position. AS degrees account for the highest level of education of 44.4% of Directors, Highest (Ph.D.) and lowest (HS/GED) levels of education are equally represented in the Director position.

Chart 7

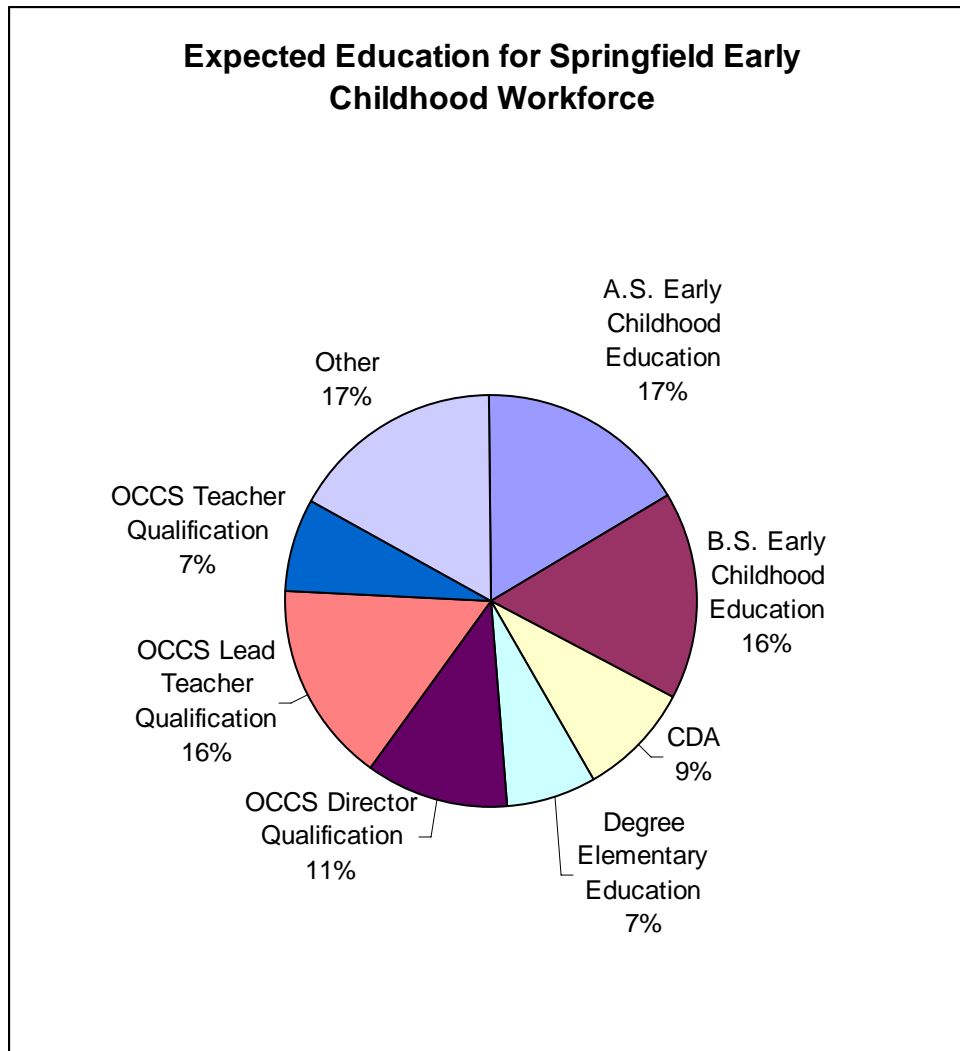


Chart 7 represents the expected educational attainment of Springfield's workforce. The greatest percent of expected education is at the non-degree level (43%): 34% expect to earn an OCCS qualification and 8.7% expect to earn the CDA credential. Nearly equal percents of the workforce expect to earn AS degrees in Early Childhood degrees or BA in EC (16.4% and 16.1% respectively), while nearly 25% intend to pursue education outside of early childhood teacher education.

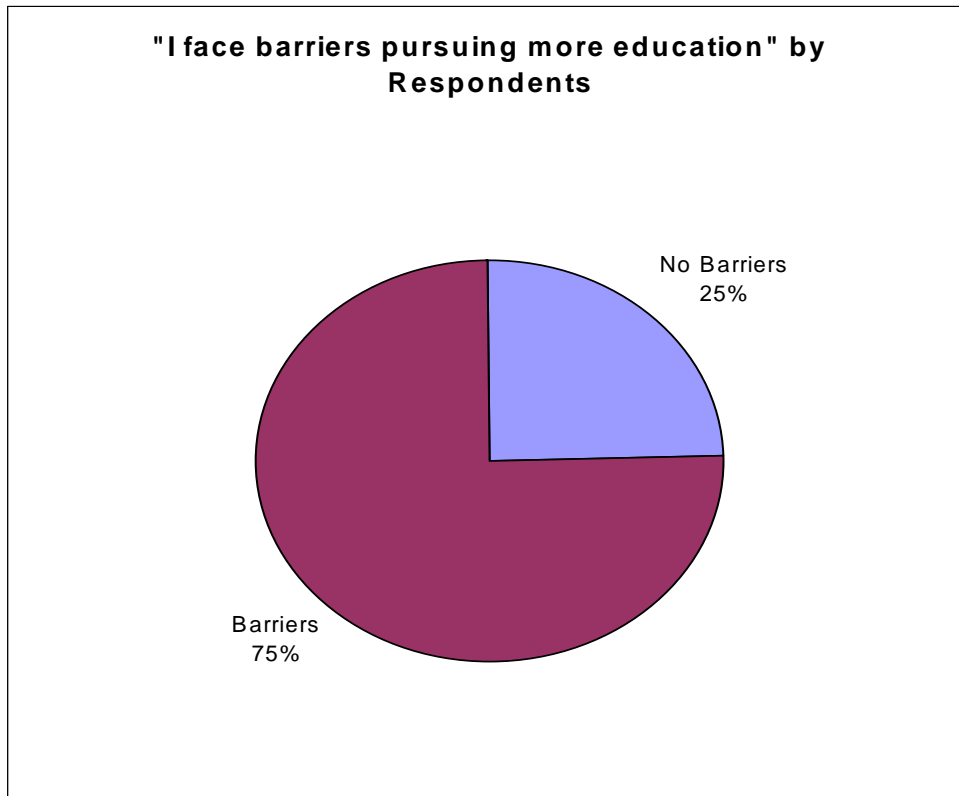
Chart 8

Chart 8 represents the percent of respondents who indicated that they faced barriers to obtaining more education in this field. Over 75% of the respondents indicated that there were indeed some barriers to continued education or training.

Table 1

Position	Number of Respondents	Enrolled in Community College	Percent	Enrolled in Four-year College	Percent
Assistant Teacher	43	5	11.6	3	6.9
Teacher	129	17	13.1	4	3.1
Lead Teacher	96	9	9.3	7	7.2
Director	27	0	0	5	18.5

Table 1 represents the enrollment of Springfield's workforce in community colleges and four-year colleges.

Chart 9

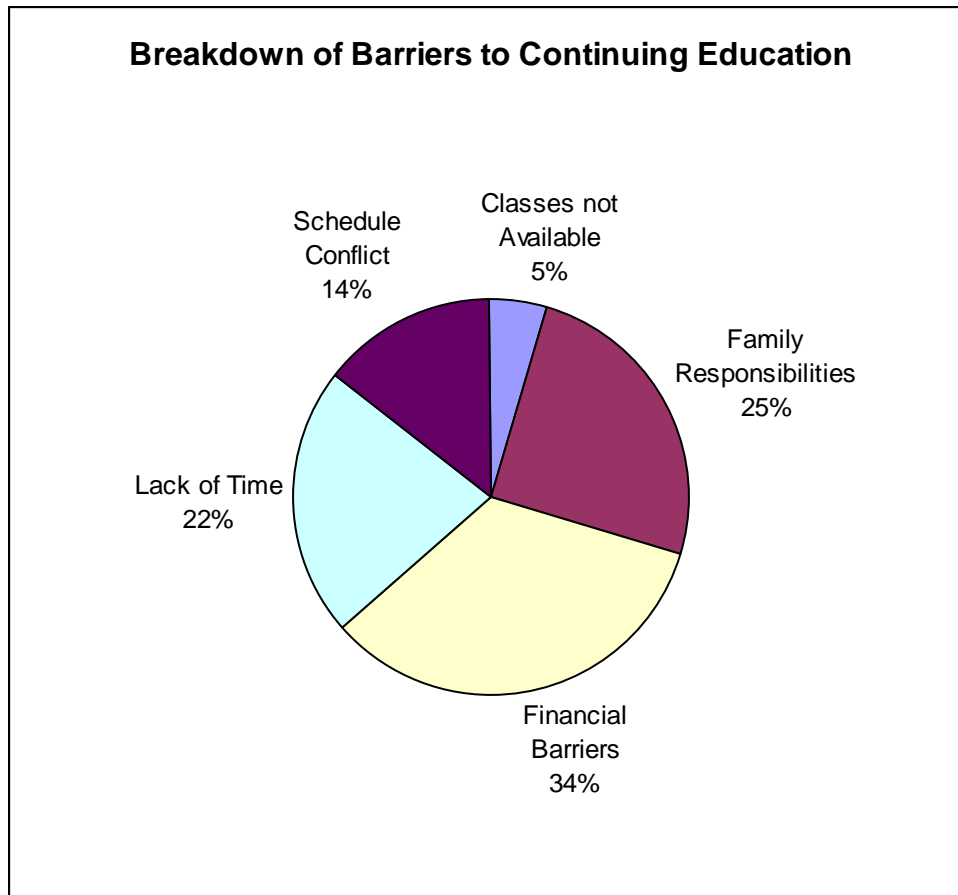


Chart 9 illustrates each barrier to education that was reported by survey respondents, presented as barrier % of the aggregate number of barriers faced. Financial barriers represent the most reported barrier (33.8%) while the combined remaining and multiple categories of barriers share characteristics relative to time or scheduling.

Table 2

Position	Number of Respondents	Face Financial Barriers	Percent
Assistant Teacher	43	19	44.1
Teacher	96	41	42.7
Lead Teacher	129	49	37.9
Director	27	13	48.1

Table 2 represents the number of respondents who indicated that they faced financial barriers to their continued training and education, by position in the occupational structure. Nearly half of the Directors reported that they faced such a barrier. Lead Teachers represent the position in the occupational structure that reported the smallest percent of its group as facing financial barriers.

Section One: Salary

Chart 10

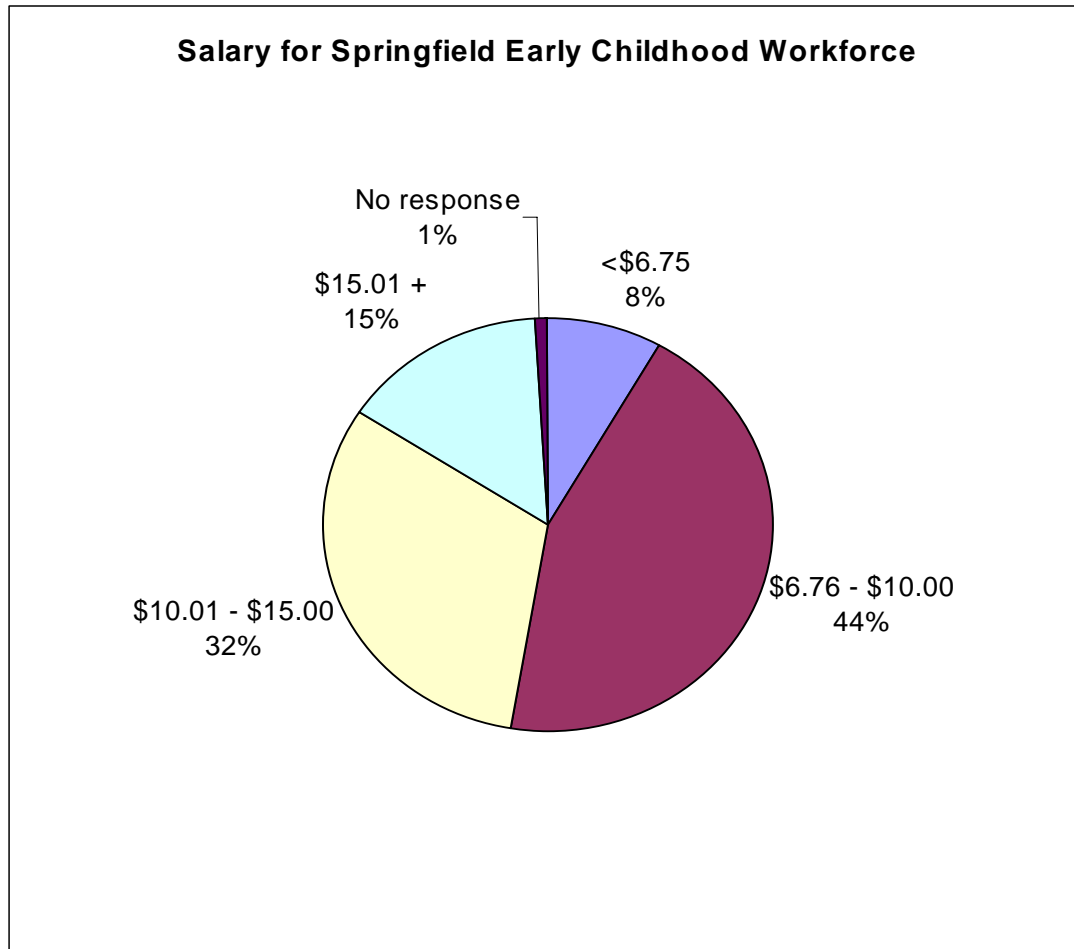


Chart 10 represents the salary of the early childhood workforce in Springfield. At least 53% of the workforce earns ten dollars per hour or less. For individuals who work 37.5 hours per week, this amounts to less than 20,000 per year. While 32% of the workforce earn between 10.01 and 15.00 per hour, the difference in the salary range can be as great as ten thousand dollars per year.

Chart 11

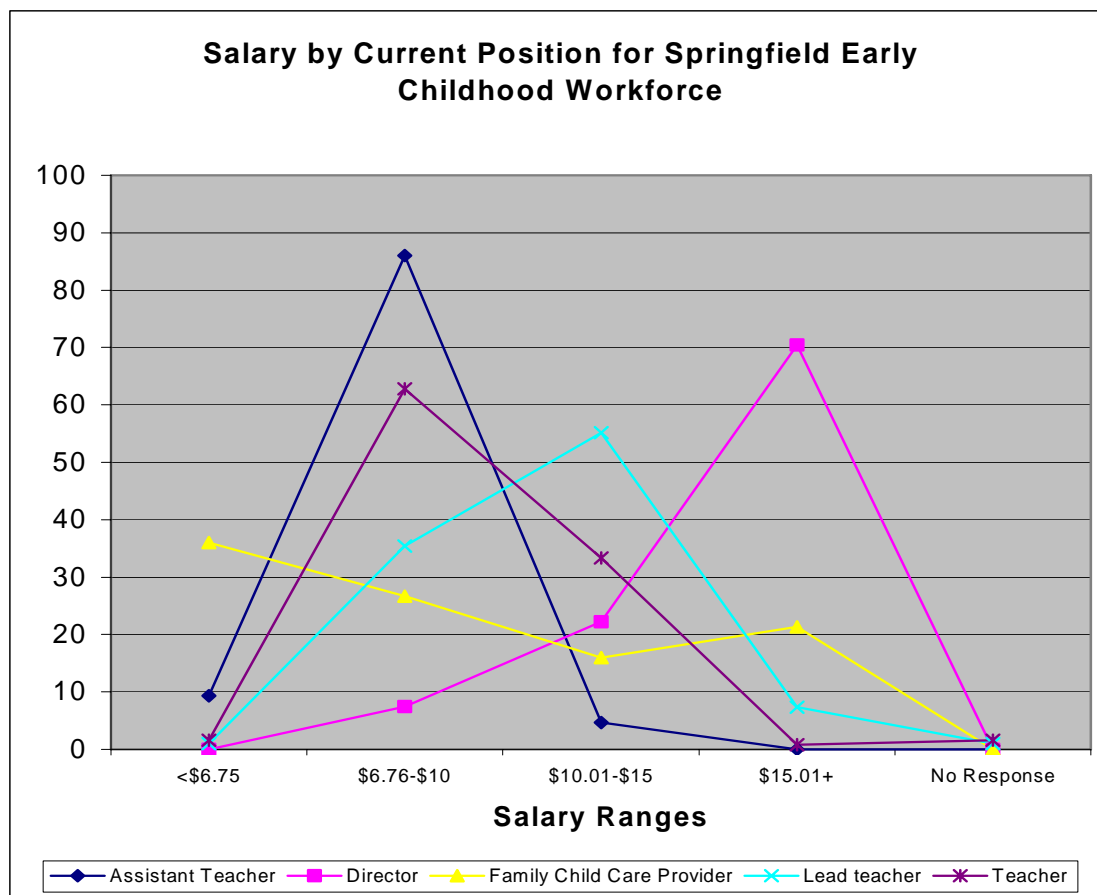


Chart 11 shows the salaries of respondents reported by position. While Assistant Teacher represents the only position in center-based programs that does not require any education or experience, over 80% of Assistant Teachers who responded to the survey indicated making \$ 6.76 - \$ 10.00 per hour. All five positions included in this chart show earnings in the \$ 10.01 - \$ 15.00 range, Lead Teachers reporting the greatest percent earning within that range. The hourly wages peak by position accordingly: Assistant Teacher and Teacher - \$ 6.76 - \$ 10.00, Lead Teacher - \$ 10.01 - \$ 15.00, and Director - \$ 15.01+. Family Child Care Providers is the only group showing hourly wages at or lower than the Massachusetts minimum wage.

Chart 12

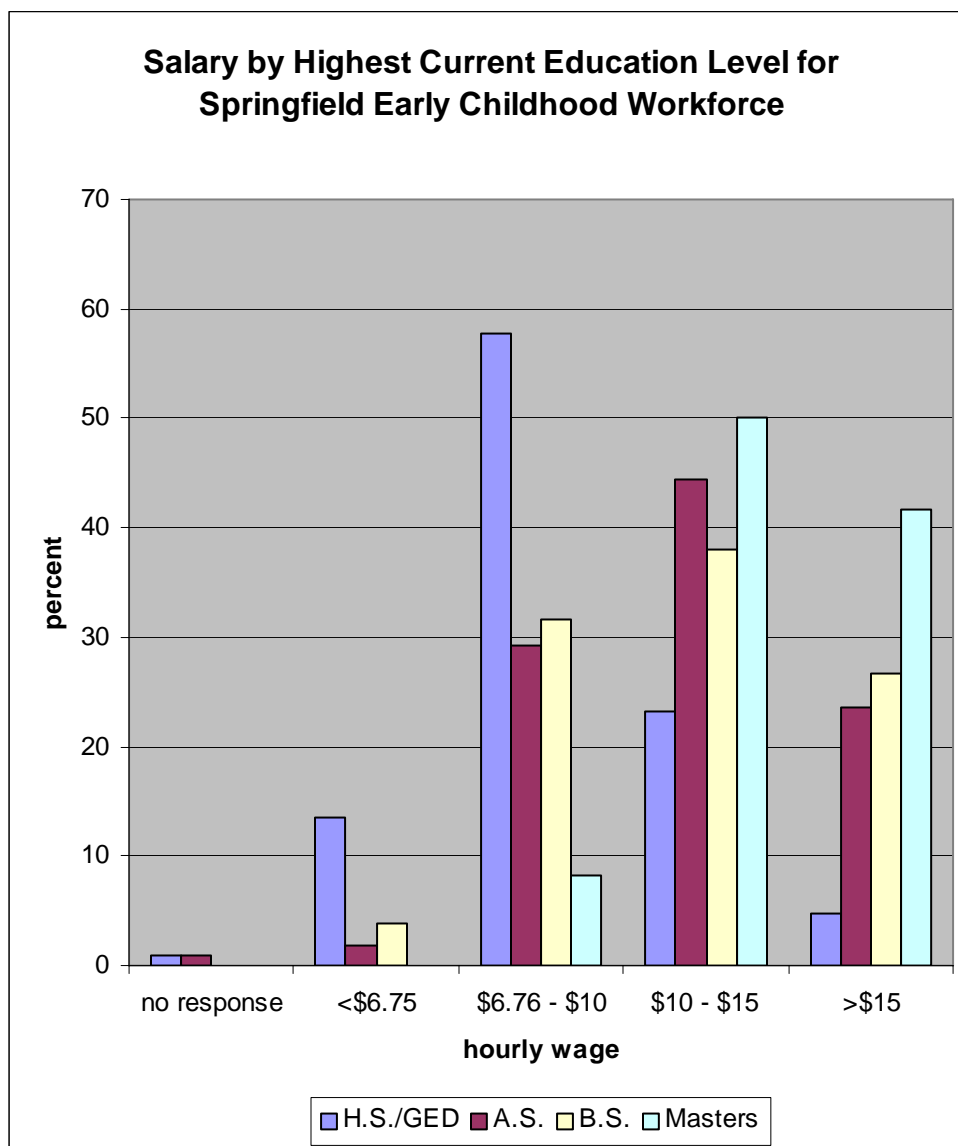


Chart 12 indicates the hourly wages reported by highest level of education. Nearly 60% of respondents who indicated that a high school diploma or GED represented their highest level of educational attainment earned \$ 6.76 - \$ 10.00 per hour. Individuals with AS degrees reported earning \$ 10.01 - \$ 15.00 as their hourly wage (44.3%). Individuals with AS degrees BA degrees are compensated similarly although the BA degree earners reported a larger percent (31.6) earning in the \$ 6.76 - \$ 10.00 range than AS degree holders (29.2%).

Section One: Workforce Demographics

Chart 13

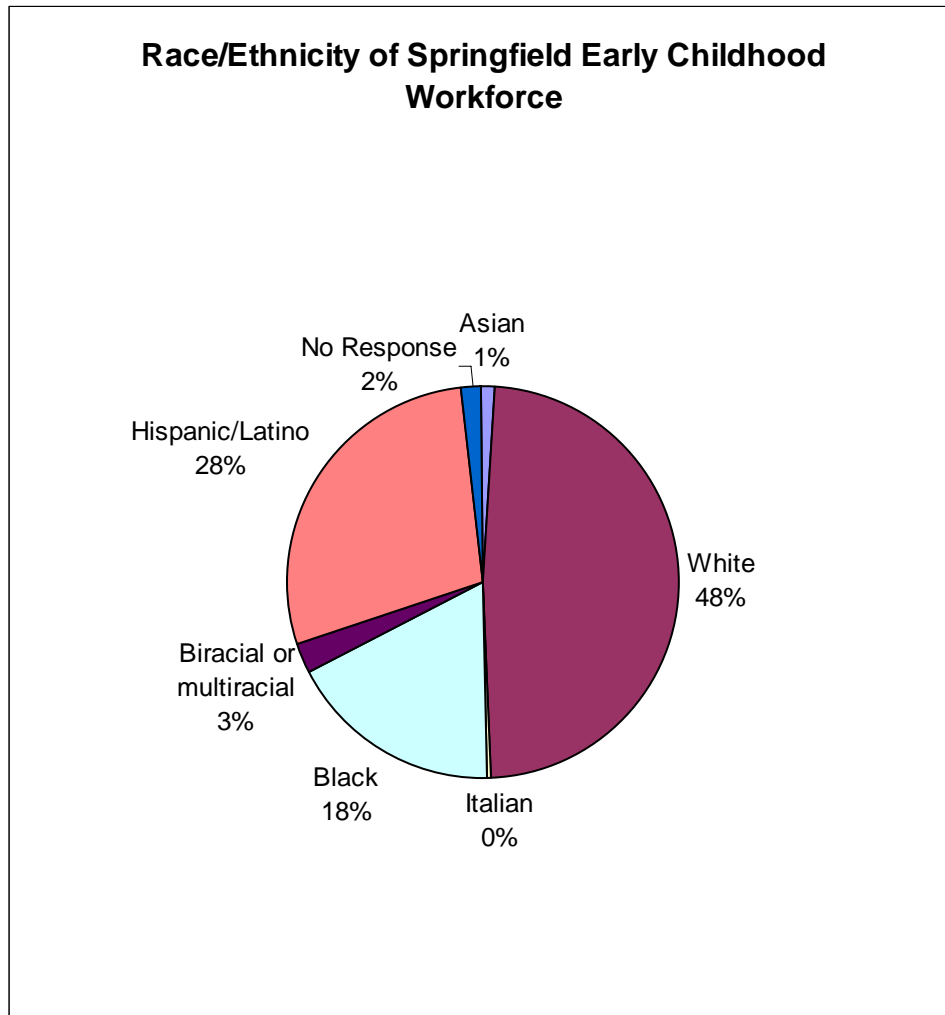


Chart 13 represents the early childhood workforce demographics in Springfield. The largest percent of the workforce is White (48.2), the second largest percent is Hispanic/Latino (28.3) and the third largest percent of the workforce is Black, non-Latino (17.7%). Biracial or multiracial individuals represent 2.6% of the workforce. Other racial and ethnic groups represented less than one percent of the sample respondents.

Chart 14

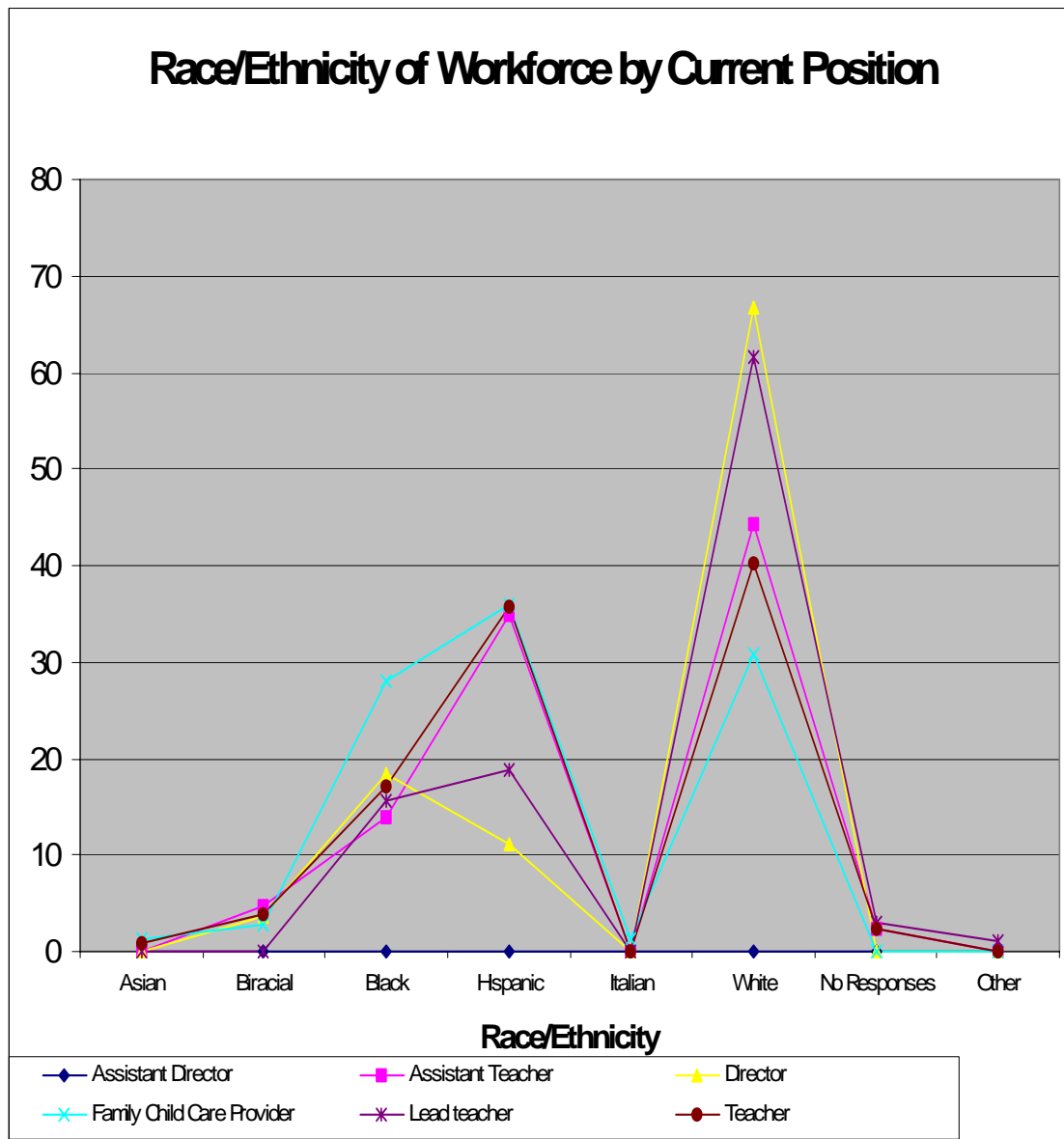


Chart 14 represents the Race/Ethnicity of Springfield's workforce by current position. More Family Child Care Providers are Latino than Black non-Latinos and Whites. There is less than a 5% increase or decrease in any single position by race/ethnicity between the Assistant Teacher and Teacher position. However, a significant decline (nearly 50%) in the percent of Hispanic/Latinos occurs between the position of Teacher and Lead Teacher. The percent of Black, non-Hispanic educational staff also decreases between those positions while the percent of White educational staff increases at each position of OCCS occupational structure. At the Director level, the highest OCCS position in its structure, the percent of Hispanic/Latino Directors is 11.1. Black, non-Hispanics represent 18.5% of the Directors in Springfield and 66.7% of the Directors in the

workforce are White. The workforce survey collected demographic information relative to Race/Ethnicity and included three questions, not included in the display of workforce demographics. The responses may be summarized as follows:

- 99% of the early childhood workforce in Springfield is female.
- eight (8) respondents indicated that they spoke only Spanish.

The average ages of the workforce by position are:

Family Child Care Providers	42.9
Assistant Teachers	33.8
Teachers	34.9
Lead Teachers	39.3
Directors	41.

Section Two: Discussion of Data

Experience

While it appears that the early childhood workforce is experienced, there is a clear indication of turnover at the 5-10 year experience mark. This indicates that incentives, interventions and initiatives that will retain staff are critical before individuals reach their third or fourth anniversary of employment in the field.

Some individuals in Assistant Teacher positions indicate that they have been in the field of early childhood for more than two years, in some cases over 10 years. This may indicate that at the entry-level position, there are no incentives for Assistant Teachers to obtain the Teacher qualification. It may also be an indication of no intention to pursue education for some Assistant Teachers. Because there is only a nine-month experience requirement for the Teacher Position, Assistant Teachers with more than two years of experience qualify as Teachers **if** they have only one course in Child Development. The fact that some remain employed as Assistant Teachers, beyond the experiential level indicates that no course in Child Development was taken or the individual did not seek to apply for Teacher certification. It is possible that individuals in the Assistant Teacher position (or any other position in the occupational structure) may have accumulated hours of training and education in CEU's and through workshops and seminars, which meet or exceed the number of contact hours required in a college course.

While decreasing percents of Assistant Teachers could mean that these individuals get promoted to Teacher positions (or higher), it could also be an indication that they leave the field entirely. The teacher shortage and the shortage of experienced, qualified individuals available to work in early childhood are well documented. Individuals who enter the workforce at the entry-level position of Assistant Teacher need educational markers and training objectives that are conditions of continued employment, linked with increased compensation and employment opportunities. The attrition rate appears to increase at the 5-10 year mark of experience, indicating that the early childhood field will face staff shortages consistent with the state and nationwide teacher shortages in public education if appropriate interventions and initiatives are not implemented. Without aggressive campaigns to recruit and hire individuals with clear interest in becoming part of Springfield's early childhood workforce, coupled with compensation and continuing education as a criterion for employment, Springfield will be forced to maintain its current and unfavorable rate of workforce attrition.

Education

Because of the large number of Assistant Teachers in the field with HS/GED as their highest level of educational attainment, it is critical that workforce development strategies focus on entry-level positions, although every position in the occupational structure shows gaps in educational attainment. More than ½ of the entire workforce are at the lowest educational attainment level of the occupational structure.

The data relative to the number of Lead Teacher and Directors who do not appear to pursue education beyond the AS degree level, or perhaps even the OCCS course requirements, are troubling. One important consideration is that the Associate Degree generally requires 60 credits or more, and at least half of those credits are traditionally earned as general education requirements. This means that individuals who have taken four courses to become Lead Teacher qualified and perhaps another two in order to become Director qualified, have only a limited number of additional early childhood courses that could be applied toward an AS degree. Those individuals will require a different focus from entry-level members of the workforce. While entry-level training and education may be frontloaded with OCCS educational requirements, individuals with Lead Teacher and Director credentials need additional education outside of the early childhood field of study, in the Liberal Arts, Math and Sciences to earn their AS degrees and ultimately their BA degrees. A strategy that incorporates on-site career counseling at institutions where degrees will be pursued would assist individuals in selecting the appropriate courses required at each institution and could support individuals through cohorts or the development of learning communities, another effective pedagogical approach.

It appears that the minimum (HS/GED) and the maximum (Ph.D.) levels of educational attainment can share the same position within the occupational structure. This may indicate that individuals with college courses and OCCS certifications have not converted their experience and training into college credits leading to a degree. On the other hand, it may indicate a lack of motivation or incentive to earn a degree because the highest position in the occupational structure does not require a degree. In fact, not one of the positions in the structure requires a college degree. With new DOE standards for teachers, it is likely that individuals will need to consolidate their experience and education, with the help of career and academic counselors.

While a substantial percent of individuals face financial barriers to education, it is important to note that aside from finances, each of the remaining barriers is linked to some element of time and scheduling. This challenges every training entity and institution of higher education to rethink the way it delivers its services.

Salaries

It is not surprising that some individuals report earning less than the Massachusetts minimum wage if they are not compensated for overtime hours or hours beyond their established schedules. In early childhood, especially in child care, individuals are compelled to remain at work, regardless of compensation. This results in foregone wages for the providers and caregivers, and is an issue of particular importance in any conversation or action concerning the strengthening of the workforce.

The range of salaries indicates that many individuals in the workforce are indeed, the working poor. A closer look at types of programs and their compensation structure is

needed to establish ways to align experience and education with employment compensation and fringe benefits.

Demographics

The demographics of the workforce reflect a large percent of minorities, Hispanic/Latinos and Blacks, non-Hispanic. In fact, the percent of those groups nearly equal that of Whites in the workforce. The percents of minorities, especially Hispanic/Latinos, for each position higher than Teacher, *decrease*, and most notably documents a disproportionate number represented in the Director position. Therefore, while the percent of Whites increase at each level, including the highest, the percent of Hispanic/Latinos decrease as education and compensation increase, although minorities represent an almost equal percent of the workforce. It is critical that the variables that contribute to the significant decrease in Hispanics/Latinos be identified and addressed as plans emerge to strengthen the workforce.

Summary and Recommendations

Increased flexibility, applied to existing training options and sources can provide essential professional development for early childhood providers. At the same time, combining new, creative, and relevant strategies for training an early childhood workforce will result in “Career Ladder” or “Career Lattice” that will reflect the changing demographics in Springfield and accommodate the existing workforce. As the Working Group continues to learn more about the workforce and its pre-service, in-service and higher educational interests and requirements, professional development options and equitable opportunities may be tailored to meet specific needs, and as such, its plan will become a dynamic mechanism for maintaining quality and improving service.

In sum, while this report represents a wealth of data relative to the amount of experience, education, salary and demographics of Springfield’s workforce, it creates only a silhouette of those who provide care and education to Springfield’s youngest children. These data create a foundation for establishing some structure for careers in the field, career lattice; they make statements that may be “generalizeable” to a high percentage of the local workforce, given the commendable rate of response. The data also ask questions, that may be answered by combining additional data, and are likely to yield important additional questions about the workforce that will require multiple methods of data collection (such as interviews or review of documents), comparisons and analysis that will precede the establishment of ladder/lattice frameworks. At this time, there is no “Best Practices” model for improving the quality of services to children by strengthening the workforce specifically designed for compatibility with the needs and characteristics of those working in Springfield. The results of this report and its recommendations may assist Springfield in designing such a model and ultimately sharing it with other cities committed to the same workforce development objectives. Training entities and area colleges that serve minority populations, may directly and positively influence services and programming for children and at the same time address the leaking pipeline for Hispanics and other minority populations seeking post-secondary education and training.

Finally, these data may be useful to other working groups of the Cherish Every Child initiative as recommendations are addressed and actions begin.

The following are recommendations to strengthen Springfield's early childhood workforce:

- Develop a strategy to review college credits, transcripts, CEU's and training certificates that will provide the workforce with individualized Professional Development Plans.
- Bring all individuals in the workforce up to college entrance levels for English and Math.
- Create meaningful challenge exams for Child Development and create options to challenge college general education courses.
- Determine where the gaps in training, course offering, workshops and seminars exist and narrow them by creatively designing new programs and alternative modes of delivery.
- Challenge the early childhood community to establish meaningful incentives for its employees by: examining salary structure relative to education, experience and position responsibilities; link educational attainment and excellent performance to increases in salary and position.
- Work with area colleges to develop a formula to effectively consolidate life experience and accumulated hours of training into meaningful and transferable college credit.
- Involve providers, center owners and Boards of Directors in establishing reasonable timelines for completion of education, presented at hiring that include documented criteria for increases in salary based on education as well as experience.
- Establish mentor relationships between college faculty, center directors, and trainers to follow the progress of qualified and competent minorities as they move through the occupational structure.
- Establish partnerships among centers, colleges and training entities to create meaningful information packets and presentations about the opportunities in early childhood education to present at local high schools and parent meetings.
- Create relevant, communication intensive courses in the early childhood content areas that offer practice in language and literacy that will help individuals to succeed in college courses in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Respectfully submitted,

**The Workforce Development Working Group
 CHERISH EVERY CHILD Initiative
 June, 2004**

