

Research Notes

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Illinois Directors' Salaries: Baseline Data

Research during the past decade has documented the relationship between compensation and the quality and stability of the early childhood work force. Better pay correlates with higher quality care, lower staff turnover, and better outcomes for children.^{1,2} Most research conducted on compensation, however, has focused on teaching staff; few studies have examined directors' salaries and benefits and how compensation varies by funding auspices.

In an effort to produce baseline data in this area, the Center for Early Childhood Leadership recently mailed a salary survey to all licensed child care programs in Illinois. This Research Note summarizes the data pertaining to directors' salaries from the 493 respondents. Data relating to directors' benefits will be presented in the winter issue.

Director Profile

Sixty-five percent of the 493 respondents in this study used the role titles "director," "site director," or "program coordinator" to describe their current positions. The title "owner/director" was used by 16% of respondents, and 19% of the sample indicated that they fulfilled both administrative and teaching roles. Only 13% of the respondents managed more than one site.

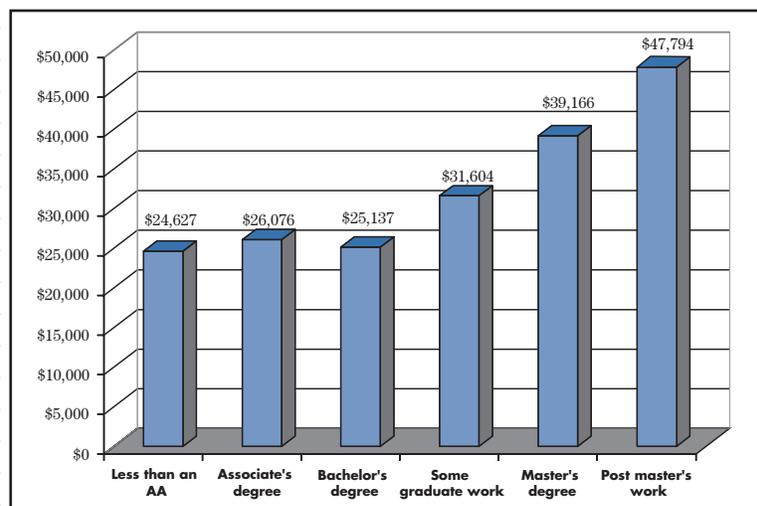
The respondents comprised a diverse group; 83% were white, 17% were people of color. African-American directors represented the largest minority (12%). The majority of directors (72%) held a baccalaureate degree; 27% held a master's degree.

One-third of the programs that directors represented were part of a larger agency. Approximately one-fifth of the sample (22%) was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; an additional 10% of programs were accredited by another professional organization.

Directors' Compensation

- **Directors' salaries/wages.** The average director's salary was \$34,473 (an hourly rate of \$15.44 per hour).
- **Multi-site managers' salaries.** Directors who operated more than one site earned more (M = \$36,997) than directors managing only one program (M = \$29,336).
- **Titles and salaries.** Respondents with the role title of "director" earned more (M = \$32,348) than either owner/directors (M = \$27,387) or director/teachers (M = \$22,170).
- **Education and salaries.** Directors with more education earned higher salaries. Figure 1 compares directors' salaries by educational level.

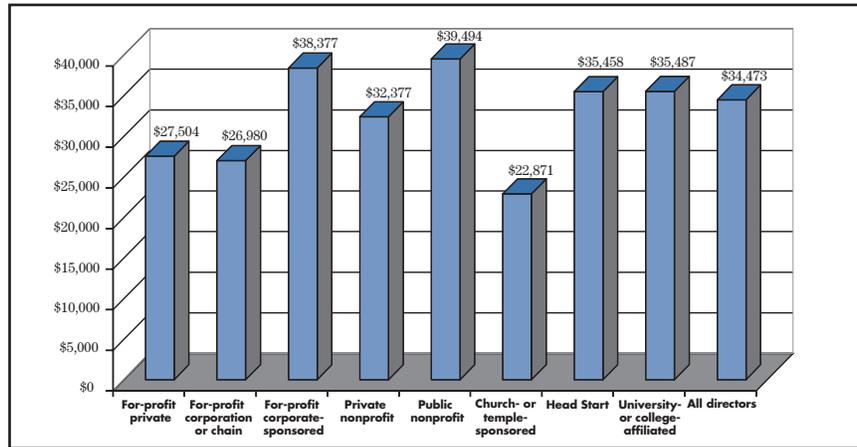
**Figure 1
A Comparison of
Directors' Salaries
by Educational
Level**



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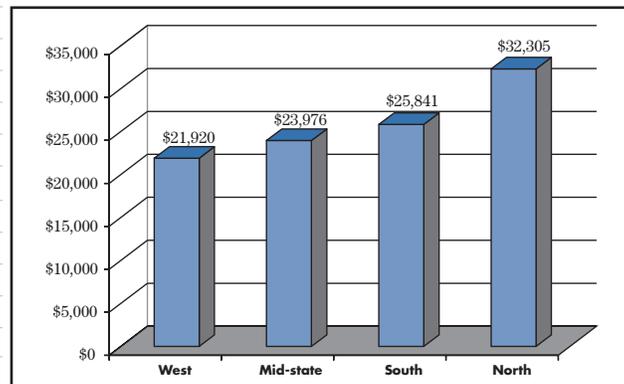
- **Accreditation and salaries.** Directors of NAEYC-accredited programs earned more (M = \$35,683) than directors of non-NAEYC-accredited centers (M = \$28,390).
- **Age and salaries.** In general, younger directors earned less than older directors. For example, directors ages 51-60 earned more (M = \$33,722) than directors ages 21-30 (M = \$25,761).
- **Legal sponsorship and salaries.** Directors who operated nonprofit public child care programs such as those run by municipal park and recreation districts or public schools earned the highest salaries. Directors working for programs that were sponsored by or housed in a church or temple earned the lowest salaries. Figure 2 summarizes the salary data by program auspice.

**Figure 2
Directors' Salaries by Program Type**



- **Agency affiliation and salaries.** Those directors whose programs were part of a larger agency received higher salaries (M = \$34,082) than directors of independent for-profit or nonprofit programs.
- **Center size and salaries.** Directors of larger programs tend to receive higher salaries. The results of the data analysis revealed a moderate correlation between student enrollment and directors' salaries ($r = .30$) and a moderate correlation between staff size and directors' salaries ($r = .37$).
- **Geography and salaries.** In Illinois there is some variation in directors' salaries by geographic region. Figure 3 summarizes these data. Directors in Northern Illinois earn more than directors in other regions of the state.

**Figure 3
Directors' Salaries by Region**



The baseline data summarized in this Research Notes demonstrate the great variability in directors' salaries. The data also raise important questions such as the relationship between directors' salaries and program quality or the relationship between directors' salaries and teachers' salaries. Additional research needs to be conducted in this area.

1. Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1998). *Worthy work, Unlivable wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988-1997*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.
2. Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team. (1995). *Cost, quality, and child outcomes in child care centers*. Denver, CO: Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy, University of Colorado at Denver.

For more information about research conducted by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, please contact Donna Rafanello, Senior Research Associate, at (800) 443-5522, ext. 5132 or visit our website (www.nl.edu/cecl).

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