

# Research Notes

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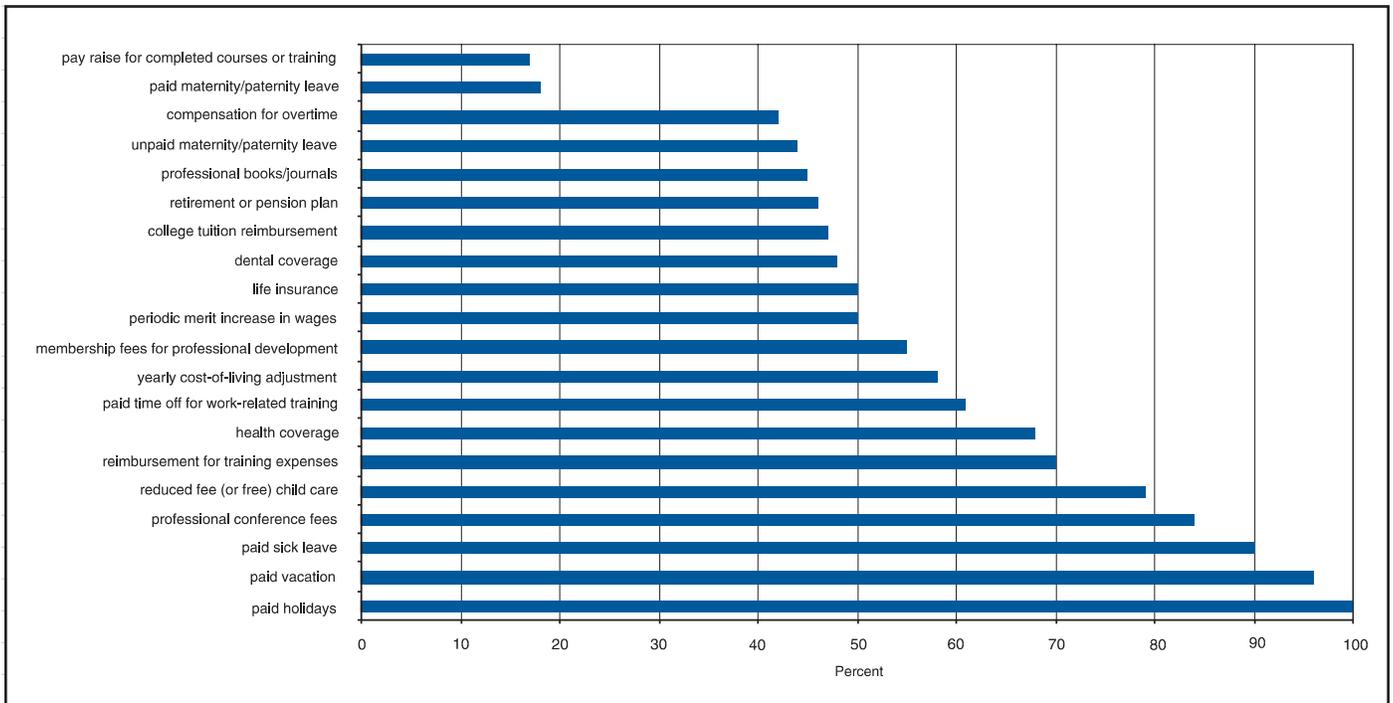
## Illinois Directors' Benefits: Baseline Data

This is the second in a series of Research Notes summarizing the findings of the 1999 Illinois Early Childhood Directors' Salary Survey. The data represent responses from 493 directors across the state. The fall 1999 issue provided baseline data on Illinois directors' salaries. This Research Note summarizes the data regarding employee benefits.

### Employee Benefits Received by Illinois Directors

Directors were asked to indicate from a list of 20 benefits, those benefits that they receive. As the graph below illustrates, almost all directors receive paid sick leave and paid holidays, while fewer receive health or dental coverage or job-protected maternity/paternity leave. Less than half of all early childhood directors have a pension or retirement plan.

### ILLINOIS DIRECTORS' BENEFITS



- The directors who received the greatest number of benefits were three times more likely to work for nonprofit than for-profit organizations.
- Administrators with the Owner/Director title often adjusted their personal benefits to reflect the financial health of their program. As one director said, "I am the owner. I get any benefits I need." Another said, "If there are funds available I receive benefits."
- Professional development benefits (e.g., books, journals, conference fees, membership fees) are often based on "funds available."
- Administrative experience correlated moderately with directors' benefits packages ( $r = .27$ ). The more administrative experience a director had, the more benefits he/she received.

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## The Size of Employee Benefits Varies Widely

While the vast majority of directors in Illinois receive paid sick leave (90%), paid vacation time (96%), and paid holidays (100%), the following table shows that the amount of time directors received for each of these categories varied greatly.

### Directors' Paid Sick Leave, Vacation, and Holidays

Employee Benefit	M	Range
Paid sick leave	8.69 days	3 - 43 days
Paid vacation	13.37 days	5 - 31 days
Paid holidays	8.40 days	5 - 28 days

## Directors Have Better Benefits Than Their Teaching Staff

The data on directors' benefits from this study provide an interesting contrast with those reported for classroom teachers/caregivers.<sup>1</sup>

- While the majority of directors in this study (68%) receive health coverage, only 48% of child care workers receive this benefit.
- Directors were also more likely to receive dental coverage (48%) than are child care workers (28%).
- More directors (46%) are offered pensions than are child care workers (31%).

Overall it can be said that while a substantial number of benefits are reaching a slightly higher percentage of child care staff, these benefits appear to be reaching the directors first.

### More Work Needs to Be Done

Early childhood educators lament the poor compensation and limited benefits available to them; benefits represent a chief reason why directors and teachers leave their positions each year. Efforts to improve the quality of care for children and families must include proposals to increase compensation and benefits to all workers in the field. Advocates in Illinois stress the need for a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that would include a career lattice rewarding teachers and administrators for advanced training and coursework. Such a system would help to guarantee that salaries and benefits would promote rather than undermine stability in the workforce and achieve improved services to children and families.

1. Illinois Department of Human Services. (1997). 1997 Report on Illinois Child Care. Springfield, IL: Author.

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](http://www.nl.edu/cecl)).

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*“Child care is one of the most challenging professions. Unfortunately, its importance is rarely reflected in financial compensation.”*

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