



Salary  
recommendations  
for the early care  
and education  
workforce.

**IOWA  
EARLY CARE  
& EDUCATION  
SALARY SCALE**

**2023**

# Philosophy

The goal of this salary scale is **competitive wages**. Turnover and staff well-being challenge the stability of early childhood programs; competitive wages are a critical part of stabilizing the workforce. The rates listed are a starting amount, not a cap or range.

The scale is a **recommended** statewide goal for early childhood programs to strive for over time. Given that program income is dependent upon tuition from families who cannot afford to pay more, implementation will likely necessitate additional sources of program revenue.

# Rationale

Professional standards and pay for early childhood educators should be linked. This scale utilizes the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) [Unifying Framework](#), aligns to the [teaching role competencies](#) put forth by Early Childhood Iowa, and is tied to IQ4K® Levels.

The basis of the scale is **wage parity between teachers with a bachelor's degree plus licensure in early childhood and entry-level public school teachers**. Parity supports equivalent pay for equivalent qualifications and ensures local variation of salaries is recognized. The scale does not entirely reflect compensation parity because it does not include benefits. Scales should be revisited and **reassessed annually** as parity shifts.

In addition to education and certification, the scale values **experience**. [Career lattice tools](#) are available to factor experience into the scale levels. Salary scales should be made **visible to employees** so that ways to increase their hourly rate is easily understood and transparent.

# Implementation

## 1. Gather information relative to your program.

- Review [salary information](#) for K-12 teachers in your area.
- Assess your current financial situation. Connect with available resources related to budget and fiscal oversight such as [First Children's Finance](#) and the [Child Care Collaborative of Iowa](#).

## 2. Utilize existing supports and resources.

- [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Iowa](#) is available to staff who wish to increase their formal education. A path exists for all members of the workforce, regardless of current education.
- Utilize [Child Care WAGE\\$® Iowa](#) as an interim strategy to increase hourly wages for staff.
- Explore additional avenues of funding including, but not limited to, [IQ4K® bonuses](#), [local ECI areas](#), [Iowa Women's Foundation](#), community partnerships, and business partnerships.
- Child Care Management Software (CCMS) can automate tasks and save time. [Learn more](#) about the advantages of a CCMS.

## 3. Create a timeline for implementation that considers not only increasing the starting wage, but appropriately increasing long-term staff.

- Consider offering or increasing benefits including, but not limited to, paid planning time, paid time off, professional development, health insurance, dental insurance, short term disability, and retirement benefits.

# The Scale

Job Role	Hourly Base Wage		Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment Raise	
Entry-Level	\$15		3%	
Lead Teacher	\$17			
On-Site Supervisor	\$18			
Administrator	\$20			
ECE Training	IQ4K® Points	Additional Hourly Wage	WAGE\$ Level	Professional Designation
Tier I, Step I	1	N/A	N/A	Entry
Tier I, Step II	2	\$3.00		
Tier I, Step III	3			
Tier II (CDA® or Paraeducator w/ training hours)	5	\$3.00	2	ECE I
Tier III (CDA® or Paraeducator w/ college credits / 12 ECE Credits / AS non-related field)			2/3	
Tier IV (ECE Diploma / AS with 12 ECE credits / 36 college credits with 12+ ECE credits / BA or BS in unrelated field)	8	\$6.00	5/6	ECE II
Tier V (AS in ECE / AS with 24+ ECE credits / 64 college credits with 24+ ECE credits / BA or BS in related field)	10		6/7	
Tier VI (BA in ECE or BA with 24+ ECE credits)	20	\$10.00	7/8/9	ECE III
Tier VII (BOEE Licensure with ECE Endorsements OR MA in ECE w/o licensure)			10	
Tier VIII (MA in ECE with teaching licensure)				

## Examples:

Entry-level worker starts at \$15/hour. ECE I with a CDA® earns \$18/hour. ECE II with Associate Degree in ECE earns \$21/hour. ECE III with bachelor degree in ECE earns \$25/hour. A director with less than a BA in ECE earns \$28/hour and a director with a bachelor's in ECE earns \$30/hour.

# The Committee

This work was led by a subcommittee of the Early Childhood Workforce Advisory Committee under the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (Iowa AEYC). The committee is dedicated to implementing the recommendations from the 2023 Child Care Workforce Study, which gathered the voices of more than 4,500 providers around Iowa to determine the state of the child care workforce. One of the most pressing findings from the study suggests that higher wages are the first and most effective

solution to enable child care businesses to recruit and retain staff. This salary scale was constructed in conjunction with those findings, with guidance from the National Workforce Center via a community of practice. The committee, comprised of a variety of stakeholders, deeply understands the challenges faced by the early care and education workforce and is committed to championing the workforce to a place of competitive pay.

## Committee Members:

- Hollie Allen, *Vine Street Child Care*
- Tessa Amato, *Child Care Resource and Referral*
- Tammy Engebretson, *Iowa AEYC*
- Wendy Hoogeveen, *Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)*
- Lauren Linnenbrink, *Iowa AEYC*
- Mary Loftus, *Stella Sanford CDC*
- Jana McCann, *Iowa AEYC*
- Teri Orr, *Child Care Resource and Referral*
- Ashley Otte, *Iowa AEYC*
- Kristie Vasey, *First Children's Finance*
- Amanda Winslow, *HHS, Early Childhood Iowa*

# Resources

Administration for Children and Families. [Provider Cost of Quality Calculator](#). Bank Street. (2020). [Equitable Compensation for the Child Care Workforce: Within Reach and Worth the Investment](#). Early Childhood Iowa. (2022). [Teaching Role Competencies](#). Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force. (2023). [Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force Final Report](#). Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development. (2019). [Consensus Statement on Early Childhood Educator Compensation](#). Iowa Child Care Workforce Study. (2023). Iowa Department of Education. (2023). [Iowa Public School and AEA Teacher and Teacher Leader Information](#). Massachusetts Institute of Technology. [Living Wage Calculator](#). North Carolina Institute for Child Development Professionals. (2023). [North Carolina Early Childhood Compensation Collaborative Model Salary Scale for Early Education Teachers](#). Office of Child Care. (2021). [Increasing Workforce Compensation Implementation Guide: Immediate Relief for the Workforce](#). Paraprofessional Salary in Iowa. (2023). Prenatal to 5. (2021). [Using Cost Estimation to Inform Child Care Policy](#).