



**Right** from the  
**Start**

## Early Educator Workforce Development

High-quality early childhood programs have effective educators who know how to work with children and families to support young children’s rapid brain development. However, **many early educators earn wages that are at the bottom of the occupational ladder** (\$12/hour for child care teachers). Effective professionals are leaving the field for better paying jobs. Rhode Island needs to establish state goals and find solutions that will attract and retain skilled, qualified, diverse educators in essential programs to ensure children get a strong start in school and life and maintain Rhode Island’s healthy economy today and tomorrow.

### Why is compensation important?

- Children, families, and programs experience high turnover of educators, **disrupting relationships that are essential to improve outcomes for children and families.**
- Programs have a “hole in the bucket” and are constantly needing to recruit, hire, and train new staff which **drains program resources.**
- **Families have difficulty accessing services** -- child care programs have significant challenges attracting and retaining effective staff; Early Intervention and Family Home Visiting programs sometimes suspend enrollment when caseloads are not manageable.

**Legislation introduced by Representative Casimiro (H-5158) and Senator Cano (S-66)** requires the state to develop goals and a plan to improve the recruitment, development, compensation, and retention of effective early educators. The bill:

- Describes the **crucial importance of the early childhood educator workforce**
- Outlines the problems child care, family home visiting, and Early Intervention programs have in attracting and retaining effective educators **due to low wages.**
- Instructs the Rhode Island Children’s Cabinet to address the crisis the industry is facing in attracting and retaining staff by **establishing a cross-departmental target wage scale for early educators** and by advancing strategies to improve compensation so there is parity with public school educators with comparable credentials.

### The Rhode Island Moving the Needle on Compensation Task Force Proposed Target Wage Scale:

Level	Education	Target Hourly Wage Floor	12-Month Target Annual Salary Floor
1	CDA/3 ECE credits	\$16	\$33,280
2	12 ECE credits	\$17	\$35,360
3	Associate’s degree	\$19	\$39,520
4	Associate’s degree + 24 ECE credits	\$20	\$41,600
5	Bachelor’s degree	\$22	\$45,760
6*	Bachelor’s degree + 24 ECE credits	\$24.15	\$50,240

\* Average starting salary for a kindergarten teacher in RI in 2017 (\$41,869) adjusted to a 12 month schedule.