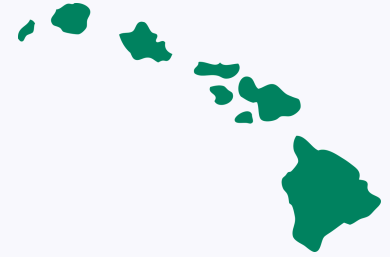


# PROPOSED SALARY SCALE FOR HAWAII'S EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE



## Hawai'i's child care workforce is in crisis.

Low wages and high turnover are undermining family stability, program quality, and the state's economy. CELFE, in partnership with UH Mānoa's Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project, developed a salary scale to set targets for fair, competitive wages for early childhood educators. Legislators must act to provide investments that will allow the state to implement a salary scale, stabilizing and equitably compensating the workforce.



## The current critical state:

About 65,000 parents in Hawai'i rely on child care to participate in the workforce. Without predictable, high-quality care, parents (especially mothers) are forced to reduce hours or leave their jobs.

**💰 Cost of disruption:** An 18-month career break can cut women's earnings by 41% over 15 years, not including the loss of benefits.

**🎯 Impact on children:** 60,000 children under 5 in Hawai'i have working parents; quality care improves long-term outcomes and community well-being.

## The wage crisis:

Child care workers are among the lowest-paid professionals in the U.S. In Hawai'i, the problem is exacerbated due to the high cost of living. With a median salary of \$36,440 (41% below the living wage for a single adult with no children), **11.8% of Hawai'i's child care workforce lives below the federal poverty line.**

Labor is the largest cost driver in ECE, and care is already unaffordable for families. ***Providers cannot raise wages without public investment.***

## Why a salary scale matters:

We've designed a salary scale to respond to two key challenges: **low entry wages and flat wage progression.** The scale supports both **recruitment** and **retention** by tying wages to credentials, experience, and position. It is grounded in qualitative and quantitative data and reflects three principles: system quality, market competitiveness, and the lived experiences of Hawai'i's child care providers.

### Benchmarks used in the salary scale include:

- Comparisons of bachelor's-level teachers and lead caregivers to K–12 Hawai'i public school salaries **resulting in a \$29.75 hourly floor for teachers with a bachelor's degree**
- Comparisons of entry-level roles to retail, hospitality, and food service jobs, where many educators leave for higher pay **resulting in a \$17.25 hourly floor for aides with a high school diploma**

Since the pandemic, 30+ states have invested public funds to provide ongoing salary increases to their early childhood workforce. Some states, such as Illinois, have used target salary scales to calculate the necessary grant for a provider to raise wages to target levels, and then provided grants to programs that allow them to do so. Other states, such as Maine, have used a salary scale to understand how well existing wage investments meet target compensation levels.

## WE URGE LEGISLATORS TO:

1. Allocate public resources to fund competitive wages
2. Use the proposed statewide scale to drive compensation investments

**Hawai'i's ECE workforce is the backbone of our economy and our children's futures. A statewide salary scale is the first step toward a professional, equitably paid workforce that meets families' needs.**

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## Statewide Salary Scale

Position	Education	Hourly	Annual	
Director (Large Center, 60+ Children)	Masters	\$43.75	\$91,000	
	<u>Bachelors</u>	\$38.75	\$80,600	→ 30% more than teachers
	Associates/60 Credits	\$35.50	\$73,840	
	CDA	\$32.00	\$66,560	
Director (Small Center, 59 children or less)	Masters	\$40.50	\$84,420	
	<u>Bachelors</u>	\$35.75	\$74,360	→ 20% more than teachers
	Associates/60 Credits	\$32.75	\$68,120	
	CDA	\$29.50	\$61,360	
Assistant Director and Family Child Care Provider	Masters	\$37.00	\$76,960	
	<u>Bachelors</u>	\$32.75	\$68,120	→ 10% more than teachers
	Associates/60 Credits	\$30.00	\$62,400	
	CDA	\$27.25	\$56,680	
	High School	\$24.25	\$50,440	
	Less than High School	\$21.25	\$44,200	
Classroom Lead: Teacher, Lead Caregiver	<u>Bachelors</u>	\$29.75	\$61,880	→ Parity with K-12 Teachers
	Associates/60 Credits	\$27.25	\$56,680	
	CDA	\$24.75	\$51,480	
Classroom Support: Assistant/Aide	Associates/60 Credits	\$25.75	\$53,560	
	CDA	\$23.00	\$47,840	
	<u>High School</u>	\$20.00	\$41,600	→ Parity with median entry level roles requiring no post-secondary education (retail, hospitality, food service)
	<u>Less than high school</u>	\$16.75	\$34,840	→ 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile of roles listed above