



2026 State of Child Care Workforce Systems

STATE WORKFORCE SUMMARY

CHILD CARE WORKFORCE	22,219
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE	\$19.02
CHILD CARE CENTERS	2,125
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES	1,618

TOTAL POINTS EARNED: **26**

Total Possible Points: 25 + 3 Potential Bonus Points

STEP	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
1	Define the Workforce	2/3
2	Develop Competencies	3/3
3	Collect & Analyze Data	3/3
4	Develop Career Pathways	3/3
5	Monitor Competency Compliance	3/3
6	Analyze Child Care Program Costs	2/2
7	Evaluate Workforce Support Costs	2/2
8	ECE System-Level Cost Modeling	1/2
9	Evaluate Financing Mechanisms	2/2
10	Determine Compensation Supports	2/2

BONUS POINTS +3

Colorado earns bonus points for its Early Care and Education Workforce Data Dashboard, the Family Child Care Network Pilots, the Early Educator Tax Credit, and the Care Worker Tax Credit.

For sources, see childcaretrust.org

STRENGTHS

- Workforce registry participation is required for all individuals working in licensed child care programs.
- Workforce data is analyzed in a public-facing workforce data dashboard and used to inform workforce strategies.
- Career pathways are articulated in a career ladder.
- Structures are in place to monitor workforce competency framework compliance.
- Programs are in place to support access to professional development and educational attainment.
- A robust program cost analysis has been used to inform workforce supports, such as increased subsidy reimbursement rates.
- Programs are in place to support workforce compensation, including the Early Educator Tax Credit, the Care Worker Tax Credit, and a livable wage pilot program.
- Sustainable funding strategies are in place, including a dedicated early childhood funding source through tobacco tax revenue, tax incentives for ECE investments, and the ability for localities to create local taxing districts to fund ECE services.

WEAKNESSES

- No documentation of robust, system-level cost modeling used in long-term ECE system improvement plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure the workforce registry and workforce data dashboard collect compensation data.
- Use the strategies recommended by the Workforce Compensation and Benefits Task Force, such as the salary scale.
- Use system-level cost modeling in long-term ECE system improvement plans.

NOTES