Early Care & Education Consortium

PRESS RELEASE

New Independent Research Highlights Value of Multi-Site Childcare Providers

Data underscores the importance of a mixed-delivery system and the critical role of private investment in supporting early education quality, investing in educators and expanding options for working families

Washington, D.C., [Nov. 18] – As families across the country continue to face challenges accessing affordable, high-quality childcare, new independent research from Tyton Partners, commissioned by the Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC), underscores the critical role multi-site childcare providers play in America's early education landscape and highlights the need for policies that prioritize quality, affordability and family choice over provider ownership structure.

The report, *A Closer Look at ECEC Providers: Workforce, Quality, and the Economics of Childcare*, examined 21 multi-site early care and education providers, representing approximately 7,000 centers and 731,000 enrolled children nationwide. Findings highlight participating providers' investments in educational quality, workforce support and access to publicly funded early learning programs.

"Solving America's childcare crisis requires us to use every resource available to support children and working families," said Radha Mohan, Executive Director of the Early Care Education and Consortium. "Families need access to safe, high-quality, affordable childcare that meets their unique needs, regardless of whether a provider is public, nonprofit or for-profit. This research reinforces the important contributions of multi-site providers and why a strong mixed-delivery system is essential to expanding quality childcare access, supporting educators and ensuring more children have the opportunity to thrive."

New Research Highlights the Value of Multi-Site Childcare Providers

The Tyton Partners analysis provides new insights into how participating multi-site providers invest in high-quality early learning experiences and support the childcare workforce.

Key findings include:

- **Commitment to quality:** More than 25% of centers represented in the study hold accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), compared with approximately 5% of center-based programs nationally. Nearly two-thirds participate in state quality rating systems.
- **Investments in safety and training:** 92% of responding providers report investments in safety and security that exceed minimum licensing requirements, while 79% report exceeding requirements for staff training.

- **Competitive educator compensation:** Participating providers pay lead teachers an average of $19.80 per hour, compared with the childcare industry's national median of $17.72 per hour for preschool teachers and $16.43 for all childcare workers. Assistant teachers and aides also earn above the industry median.
- **Comprehensive benefits:** More than 93% of responding providers offer medical insurance, 96% offer retirement plans, and all offer paid time off and childcare tuition discounts.
- **Participation in publicly funded programs:** Participating providers support families through publicly funded programs, including childcare subsidies, Head Start and state-funded prekindergarten, demonstrating how private and public resources can work together to expand early learning opportunities.

Together, these findings highlight the critical role multi-site childcare providers play in advancing early childhood education, investing in educators and expanding access to high-quality care for families nationwide.

Mixed-Delivery Approaches Expand Access and Preserve Family Choice

As families continue to face rising childcare costs and limited availability, ECEC continues to emphasize the importance of a mixed-delivery system that brings together public schools, nonprofit organizations, home-based programs and community-based childcare providers to expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities. This approach recognizes that families have diverse childcare needs based on their work schedules, children's ages and the availability of care in their communities.

States including Colorado, Michigan and Florida have adopted mixed-delivery approaches that allow publicly funded early education programs to operate across a variety of settings. By including qualified community-based providers alongside public schools, these models can help expand access to early learning while preserving existing childcare capacity and providing families with greater flexibility, particularly those who rely on infant and toddler care, extended hours or year-round programs.

Building a More Sustainable Future for Childcare

The results also underscore the financial challenges facing childcare providers, with labor accounting for an estimated 60% to 80% of operating costs, alongside ongoing investments in facilities, curriculum, safety and professional development. These pressures affect providers of all ownership types, reinforcing the importance of sustained public investment to support high-quality, affordable childcare.

About ECEC

The Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC) is a non-profit alliance of the leading for-profit childcare providers, key state childcare associations and premier educational service providers, caring for and teaching more than 1 million children daily across 7,500 programs in 47 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico (www.ececonsortium.org).