2018

Teachers' Voices

Work Environment Conditions That Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality

Miami-Dade County

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
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Established in 1999, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) is focused on achieving comprehensive public investments that enable the early childhood workforce to deliver high-quality care and education for all children. To achieve this goal, CSCCE conducts research and policy analysis about the characteristics of those who care for and educate young children and examines policy solutions aimed at improving how our nation prepares, supports, and rewards these early educators to ensure young children's optimal development. CSCCE provides research and expert analysis on topics that include: compensation and economic insecurity among early educators; early childhood teacher preparation; access to educational opportunities and work environments; and early childhood workforce data sources and systems. CSCCE also works directly with policymakers and a range of national, state, and local organizations to assess policy proposals and provide technical assistance on implementing sound early care and education workforce policy.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

THERE IS BROAD CONSENSUS that high-quality environments for young children depend on teachers who are skilled at nurturing their development and learning, yet low pay and inadequate working conditions routinely hamper teachers in their efforts to apply their skills and knowledge.[i] This condition exists among teachers in early education as well as K-12 classrooms, fueling the ubiquitous challenge of recruiting and retaining a skilled teaching workforce across the age spectrum. K-12 teachers nationwide are now calling attention to how inadequate pay and poor working conditions are driving economic insecurity and turnover and how insufficient classroom resources continue to hobble their practice, leading to large-scale demonstrations for increased public investment in education. With teachers increasingly engaging in the public sphere and a growing number of elected officials prioritizing support for schools and teaching staff, the demand for change to the systems that prepare, support, and compensate educators continues to build.

The Unique Challenge of Early Childhood

The voices of early educators — those working with children from infancy through preschool — are rarely heard, and public awareness of the challenges facing this workforce remains low. Compared to their K-12 peers, early educators are less organized and vocal about their situation, but a persistent state of teacher crisis casts a pall over efforts to ensure high-quality early care and education (ECE) for all children prior to kindergarten.

Access to unions and professional organizations that advocate for benefits and supportive work conditions in the K-12 workplace are far rarer for early educators. Perhaps as a result, early educators often don't have even basic expectations of working conditions — such as program policies providing for payment for planning time, staff meetings, and professional development; a salary schedule accounting for experience and varied levels of education; and provision of health, retirement, sick-, and vacation-leave benefits that most K-12 educators can rely upon — nor are teachers typically the focus of strategies and policies to improve the quality of early care and education services.[ii]

This study captures early educators' perspectives about their work environments in Florida's Miami-Dade County and examines how these environments impact teaching staff practice and well-being. In order to teach to the best of their ability, educators require work environments that support their ongoing learning, emphasize time without child responsibilities for professional activities, and offer dependable benefits that ensure their

well-being. With prioritization of workforce supports, quality improvement initiatives can make substantive progress towards a system that is equitable, efficient, and effective for children, their families, and educators alike.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Currently operational across 44 of the 50 states, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) have become a primary approach for quality improvement efforts intended to strengthen early care and education systems within states and local municipalities. The elements incorporated into a system's QRIS communicate important messages to stakeholders (including policymakers, teachers, and administrators) about the values and priorities deemed most important for focusing resources and attention.[iii] While staff qualifications and training are one of the most commonly assessed areas of quality and are included in nearly all QRIS, fewer systems to date include benchmarks related to positive and supportive teacher work environments.[iv] The attention that a given QRIS pays to the workforce through staff education, professional development, compensation, benefits, and work environments may determine how practitioners invest their energies, how public resources and priorities are allocated, and the ultimate success of the QRIS effort itself.[v]

Quality Improvement and Teacher Work Environments

At the time of data collection, Miami-Dade County's early learning quality improvement system was called Quality Counts (and referred to locally as the QIS). This voluntary program was available to centers throughout the county. Programs participating in Quality Counts were assigned a program rating, ranging from one to five stars, with a five-star rating indicating excellence. Participating programs received a variety of resources and supports intended to improve program practices and ratings. These resources included onsite coaching, technical assistance, and supports for professional development.

Miami-Dade's QIS did not include standards addressing work environments explicitly — such as center policies related to paid time for professional development, planning and/or preparation, or a salary schedule and staff benefits — as markers of quality in the county's rating system, although individual centers may have implemented such policies. Additionally, centers in Miami-Dade County had the opportunity to participate in other initiatives, such as Head Start, Voluntary Pre-K, and School Readiness onsite support programs. Some centers participated only in Quality Counts, some participated in another

support initiative or more than one (such as Quality Counts and Head Start), and a very few did not participate in any initiative.

Miami-Dade's early education community has recognized the imperative to address the low compensation and challenging work environment conditions impacting the well-being of educators. In this effort, stakeholders have come together to demonstrate the community's commitment to supporting early childhood programming, with more than $100 million allocated annually to children's programs, including ECE services.[vi] As of August 2018, Quality Counts in Miami-Dade County was replaced by the Thrive by 5 Early Learning Quality Improvement System. For more information on the new system and its quality improvement framework, see https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/early-learning-quality-improvement-system.

To inform current efforts to support ECE programs as well as longer-term improvement strategies, QIS administrators, advocates, and others in Miami-Dade County are interested in exploring how the quality improvement system can be strengthened, and to this end, they have used the SEQUAL tool developed by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE). For a description, see p. 5.

SEQUAL provides insight into how centers participating in the QIS compare[vii] to centers participating in other support initiatives[viii] or no initiative at all. It also gathers information on the range of conditions experienced by early educators employed in centers across census income tracts throughout the county. Gathering teachers' perspectives on the features of their work environments that best allow them to apply their skills and continue to develop their knowledge is a starting point for generating new avenues and solutions to enhance teacher practice and inform improvements in the QIS strategy.

SEQUAL (Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning)

To facilitate the process of bringing teachers' voices into quality improvement strategies, CSCCE developed the Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning tool, or SEQUAL. As a multi-purpose validated tool, SEQUAL addresses five critical areas of teachers' learning environments: **Teaching Supports**, **Learning Community**, **Job Crafting**, **Adult Well-Being**, and **Program Leadership**. The SEQUAL study conducted in Miami-Dade County provides a window into the daily realities of center-based early childhood teaching staff employed in programs participating in the county QIS, those that participate in other support initiatives, and those participating in no initiative, as well as across census income tracts.[ix]

Key Findings

Transforming the way that the early education system values and supports teacher work conditions requires sustained strategies implemented on multiple levels. The perspectives of teaching staff represented in this study can be used to inform QIS efforts and to guide workforce policy in Miami-Dade County. The findings underscore the need for further changes in practices and provision of workplace supports as well as the need for sufficient staffing to ensure that standards, including basic legal requirements like paid breaks, are consistently enforced. While teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers tended to assess their work environments more positively than programs outside of the QIS, it is notable that challenges were evident across all program types represented in the study (see Findings, p. 28). Three areas in particular require improvement based on teaching staff assessments of their work environments: Adult Well-Being, Staffing and Teaching Supports, and Professional Learning and Guidance.

Adult Well-Being

Economic

Teaching staff struggled to meet monthly expenses and afford housing, health, transportation, and food costs.

- **81%** worried about having enough to pay their families' monthly bills.
- **80%** worried about paying for routine health care costs.
- **78%** worried about paying housing costs.
- **70%** worried about having enough food for their families.

> **"Your health, mood, and general well-being affect your ability to be an effective and motivated teacher. It affects your energy, as well as the resources you can afford to buy for your kids that are not provided [by the center]."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Quality of Work Life

Quality of work life may exacerbate stress. Some staff members reported experiencing workplace dynamics like bullying or a lack of opportunities for input within their program.

- **44%** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that there was a clear process for teaching staff to have a say in decisions that affect their work.
- **35%** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their complaints, if voiced, would be considered fairly.
- **26%** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that bullying is not tolerated in their program.

> **"Sometimes when I am stressed about a financial difficulty, it is hard to focus on teaching."**
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Health and Safety

Teaching staff reported lacking basic health and safety materials or supports.

- **51%** assessed the ability to take paid breaks during the workday as undependable.
- **41%** reported that they could not depend on using their paid sick leave when ill.
- **32%** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their program provides comfortable places for adults to sit and be with children.

Staffing and Teaching Supports

Sufficient Staffing

Teaching staff assessed staffing levels as insufficient to engage in practices necessary to promote children's learning and to improve their practice.

- **44%** reported that staff coverage was insufficient to give children individual attention.
- **40%** reported that trained substitutes or floaters were not reliably available.
- **36%** agreed or somewhat agreed that frequent changes in staffing make it difficult to try new ways to teach.
- **25%** reported having insufficient time each week to carefully observe children.

Time for Professional Responsibilities

Teaching staff used their own unpaid time or time while supervising children on the playground or during naps to complete their professional responsibilities.

- **64%** reported that they could not depend on compensation for routine professional activities, including parent conferences, evening or weekend events, or work completed outside of regular working hours.
- Only **53%** had dedicated time, without responsibility for children, to discuss work-related issues with other teachers.
- **39%** did not reliably have paid time for planning or paperwork during the past week.

> **"Our challenge is [writing] down observations in the moment while taking care of the kids. It is hard."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Professional Development and Guidance

Access, Payment, and Reward

Many staff members reported difficulties in accessing or paying for professional development activities or receiving remuneration for advancing their skills or education.

- **44%** could not reliably adjust their work schedule in order to participate in professional development activities.
- **44%** could not reliably expect that their employer would pay some or all of their professional development expenses.

> **"My supervisor and director [...] dedicate time to mentoring us with continuing school and taking trainings with approved facilities. This all helps us implement appropriate practices."**
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Guidance

Teaching staff reported an absence of guidance from program leaders in supporting their professional practice.

- Less than two-thirds of teaching staff agreed that their supervisors meet with them to discuss their teaching practice (**62%**) or to offer suggestions to help improve their practice at least once a month (**62%**).
- Only **33%** agreed that at least once a year, their supervisors meet with them to develop personalized professional development plans.
- **35%** reported that they did not reliably have a choice in the form of professional development in which they took part.

> **"Considero que se debería escuchar más las sugerencias del personal docente para mejorar el trabajo."**
>
> [I believe that teaching staff suggestions should be taken more into consideration in order to improve the quality of work].
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Recommendations

Miami-Dade has made significant investments in and taken critical steps toward improving the quality of early care and education services. Notwithstanding the investment of resources and supports, the work conditions of teaching staff as captured in this study suggest further efforts are needed to support teacher practice and well-being necessary for quality services.

Leaders in Miami-Dade have an opportunity to shape expectations and codify standards for early educator work environments. The following recommendations support funders and policymakers in advancing the county's efforts to enhance its quality improvement system and address work environment conditions.

1. Develop workplace standards, such as guidance on appropriate levels of paid planning time, which are necessary for educators to engage in professional practice and to alleviate conditions that cause educator stress. Use existing models, such as the **International Labor Organization Policy Guidelines** and the **Model Work Standards**, to support this process. Developing these standards will benefit programs throughout Miami-Dade by:

- Identifying conditions and supports that teaching staff need to effectively fulfill the professional responsibilities necessary for effective teaching;
- Acknowledging how systemic challenges to all programs impact daily teaching practice; and
- Elevating appropriate work environments as a critical component necessary to achieving desired child outcomes.

2. Provide financial resources and other assistance specifically designed to enable programs and providers to comply with work environment standards in a reasonable period of time. To accomplish this goal, resources should be:

- Long-term and sustainable over time;
- Sufficient to cover the costs associated with meeting the established work environment standards; and
- Evaluated to determine their long-term impact and effect.

3. Embed work environment standards in the Miami-Dade quality improvement system to emphasize their importance and ensure that programs cannot reach the highest quality level without addressing work environment standards. Acknowledging the inherent challenges in adjusting the existing QIS, Miami-Dade County could initiate this process by documenting work environment conditions during the quality assessment process without incorporating them into scores.

This effort would allow Miami-Dade to collect valuable site-level data on work environments that can support ongoing efforts to integrate work environment standards into the quality improvement system and Miami-Dade's professional development system as a whole.

4. Develop and implement training programs that support programs leaders, supervisors, and coaches to address work environment issues. Program leaders, supervisors, and coaches all require support and training on how to implement and sustain these types of changes. The following steps may assist in this process:

- Utilize this SEQUAL study, other SEQUAL materials, and additional resources such as the **International Labor Organization Policy Guidelines** and the **Model Work Standards** to develop an initial list of potential training areas; and
- Conduct a needs assessment with program leaders, supervisors, and coaches to further develop and prioritize training topics and content areas.

5. Provide funding to institutions of higher education and training programs to develop and offer classes and workshops related to work environment standards, rights of teaching staff on the job, and the critical importance of economic, emotional, and physical well-being among adults in the workplace. Strategies to begin this process include:

- Conducting a needs assessment with representatives from institutions of higher education and training organizations to identify existing college courses and training programs that could be expanded to include work environment standards;
- Determining which topics around work environment standards would require new college-level courses or training programs; and
- Establishing a funding process that would provide resources and incentives to institutions of higher education and training organizations to incorporate work environment standards into new or existing courses or training.

6. Institute strategies that engage early educators in the process of informing quality improvement and regularly collect data to assess how they experience the work environment. Strategies to begin this process include:

- Adjusting planning and meeting times to be more accessible to early educators;
- Creating opportunities for teaching staff to submit audio or video testimonials that can capture their perceptions on work environment conditions and can also be used to bring teachers' voices and opinions into the planning process; and
- Incorporating opportunities for input on work environments into existing regional meetings, conferences, etc.

Capturing the experiences and perspectives of early educators working directly with children as a component of evaluating Quality Counts presents an opportunity to further refine and strengthen the policies, practices, and resources necessary to facilitate a high-quality system that supports children and their teachers alike. The findings from the Miami-Dade SEQUAL study presented in the following pages, coupled with forthcoming resources, are intended to inform decision making and guide quality improvement strategies county-wide.

About This Report

THE FOLLOWING REPORT PRESENTS the findings from the 2018 Miami-Dade County SEQUAL study conducted in the spring of 2018. The study shares the perspectives of teaching staff employed in center-based programs in Miami-Dade County, including those that participated in the county's QIS, Quality Counts, those that participated in other support initiatives, as well as programs that did not participate in any of the initiatives available. Variations in teacher assessments by center location in low- or middle-to-high-income census tracts were also observed. Following a description of the study design, this report will explore major findings drawn from teaching staff responses. The report is divided into three sections:

1) Study Design shares a study overview, the goals guiding the study, a profile of the survey respondents, and a guide to the findings;

2) Findings outlines teaching staff responses to items in each of the five SEQUAL domains, including an analysis of how responses varied by site characteristics and quality ratings; and

3) Appendices presents additional information on the study design, which includes survey instruments and analysis, characteristics of program leaders, and additional tables and figures.

STUDY DESIGN

Study Overview

In 2018, researchers from CSCCE implemented a SEQUAL study in Florida's Miami-Dade County to examine how teaching staff employed at center-based programs throughout the county assessed their work environments. The study took into consideration licensed child care centers participating in the county's quality improvement system (Quality Counts), those participating in some other support initiative, and those not participating in any initiative, as well as centers located in low- and middle-to-high-income census tracts. Nearly all the centers sampled, including those participating in the QIS and those outside the system, participated in at least one additional support initiative. Teaching staff (teachers and assistant teachers) completed an online survey — the SEQUAL for teaching staff — to capture perceptions of their work environments and provide information about their demographic background, educational preparation, and work experience, including their current position, job tenure, and compensation. In addition, program leaders filled out a different version of the online survey to provide contextual information about their centers. They also answered questions about their own demographic and professional background and current job role.

The sample was drawn from the 1,219 active licensed child care centers listed in the Miami-Dade Web-based Early Learning System (WELS) registry as of January 3, 2018. Among the 130 centers invited to participate, the final sample included 85 centers, 45 program leaders, and 280 members of teaching staff.

For a more detailed description of the study methodology, study instruments, sampling frame and selection, population and sample, response rates, and analysis plan, please see **Appendix A: Study Design** and **Appendix C: Tables and Figures**.

Goals Guiding the Study

The study surveyed teaching staff employed at center-based programs, examining how they assessed their work environments overall and along specific domains, as captured by the SEQUAL survey instruments (see description, p. 72). Programs participating the county's quality improvement system (Quality Counts) and those not participating were included in the study. The programs in the survey were also located across census income tracts. In addition, the study examined how assessments varied by:

- The center's participation in support initiatives, including the county's QIS, other such initiatives, or no initiative;
- Whether the center was located in a low-income zone (as determined by census tract); and
- Teaching staff characteristics, including position, job role, education, race/ethnicity, tenure, and age group of children in the classroom.

A Profile of the Survey Respondents

Teaching Staff

This detailed portrait of the teaching staff in our sample notes differences among staff members based on job role and other characteristics. If differences are not noted, there were no statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) found among staff members.

The vast majority of staff in the sample worked full-time at their center. More than three-quarters (87 percent) worked 40 hours or more per week, and almost all teaching staff (97 percent) worked 10 months or more per year. Among teaching staff, 27 percent worked as assistant teachers and 73 percent as teachers.[x]

Teaching staff were slightly more likely to work exclusively with infants and toddlers (34 percent), than with three- and four-year-olds (31 percent) or both (29 percent). Six percent of teaching staff also worked with school-age children.

Personal Characteristics

Gender and Age

Nearly all teaching staff in the sample were female (99 percent). Teaching staff were 38 years old, on average. Seventy-five percent of teaching staff working in Quality Counts-participating centers were over age 30, compared to 69 percent of teaching staff working in centers not participating in the QIS.

Family Characteristics

More than one-half (55 percent) of teaching staff in the sample reported their status as married or living with a partner. Around one-quarter (26 percent) of teaching staff reported having a child under the age of five living in their household, while one-half (51 percent) reported having a child between the ages of six and 18. Across respondents, 56 percent of teaching staff reported having a child under age 18 living in their household.

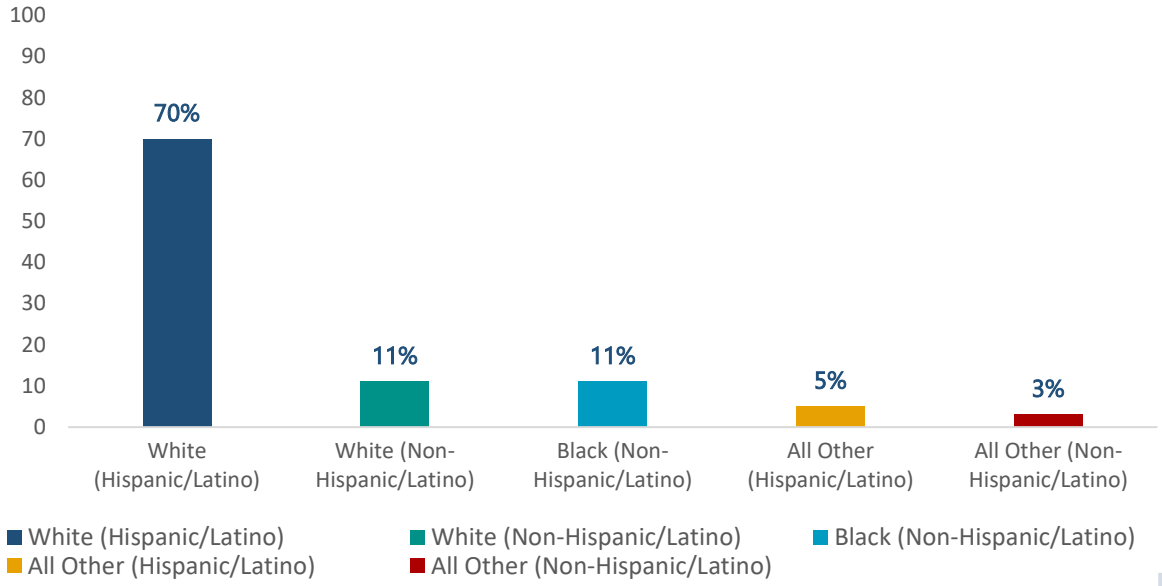
Race and Ethnicity

The teaching staff in this sample mirror the county population as a whole. The teaching staff in the sample self-identified as 70-percent white (Hispanic/Latino), 11-percent white (non-Hispanic/Latino), 11-percent black/African American (non-Hispanic/Latino), 5-percent other (Hispanic/Latino), and 3-percent other (non-Hispanic/Latino) (see **Figure 1**).

Teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers were more likely to identify as Hispanic/Latino (84 percent), compared to teaching staff working in centers not participating in the QIS (68 percent). Teaching staff working in middle-to-high-income census tracts were also slightly more likely to identify as Hispanic/Latino (82 percent), compared to teaching staff working in low-income census tracts (76 percent). The distribution of positions by racial identification suggests limited evidence of racial stratification.

Figure 1

Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents



Note: Respondents had the option to select more than one racial/ethnic category.

As the sample of other individual racial/ethnic categories was too small to report, for confidentiality reasons, they have been collapsed into the category "All Other" in **Figure 1**.

Country of Origin

Sixty percent of teaching staff were born outside of the United States. The most commonly reported country of origin was Cuba (22 percent), followed by Colombia (4 percent), Venezuela (4 percent), Peru (3 percent), and Puerto Rico (2 percent), reflecting similar findings from the 2017 *Miami-Dade Quality Counts Workforce Study*.[xi]

Languages Spoken

Teaching staff in the sample were linguistically diverse: 79 percent reported speaking another language in addition to English. The most commonly reported languages were Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese. Seventy percent of teaching staff reported speaking Spanish fluently. Teaching staff employed at centers participating in the QIS were more likely to report speaking Spanish fluently (76 percent) than teaching staff employed at centers outside of the QIS (64 percent). Forty-three percent of all respondents reported that they spoke English fluently. Compensation differences were found by language spoken. Teaching staff who reported not speak English fluently earned a lower median hourly wage ($9.75), compared to teaching staff who reported English fluency ($11.00). Annualized for a full-time, full-year position, the $1.25 wage differential amounts to $2,400.

Dual Language Learners

In early care and education classrooms across the nation, children are culturally and linguistically diverse and becoming increasingly more so. Census data have ranked Miami-Dade County one of the most bilingual regions in the United States, with 59 percent of the overall county population identifying as native Spanish-speaking.[xii] Throughout Miami-Dade, commonly spoken languages include English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese, among others.[xiii] With such diverse populations, bilingualism in Miami-Dade is a reality both inside the classroom and out.

In the present study, Spanish-speaking dual language learners (DLLs) were reported in the classrooms of 85 percent of teaching staff. Among teachers themselves, 70 percent reported Spanish-language fluency, but just 43 percent reported fluency in English. Regardless of how closely they may reflect the linguistic or cultural background of children in their care, ECE teachers must be prepared to employ and engage in pedagogical practices that optimize learning and development.

According to CSCCE's *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*,[xiv] a tool designed to describe the landscape of early childhood degree programs, many such programs across the country lack courses focused on pedagogical and practical strategies for preparing future educators to work with DLLs. Though the majority of early childhood degree programs in the state of Florida include required course content related to teaching DLLs, these institutions still face the challenge of a lack of faculty with expertise related to teaching children who are DLLs and who represent diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.[xv] Similar to the scant preparation teaching staff may receive during their degree program, there is also a lack of training at their center for teaching children with linguistic diversity. For example, within this study, 30 percent of teaching staff reported that training for teaching children who are DLLs was inconsistently available.

Education and Credentials

Across the sample, teaching staff held a higher level of education than estimates for educators statewide. According to the 2015 Migration Policy Institute fact sheet, 36 percent of the Florida early childhood workforce held an associate degree or higher.[xvi] In comparison, within our SEQUAL sample more than one-half of teaching staff in both QIS- and non-QIS participating centers had an associate degree or higher (55 percent and 66 percent, respectively). Thirty-seven percent of the teaching staff employed in QIS-participating centers and 47 percent of teaching staff employed in non-QIS-participating centers had a bachelor's degree or higher, while 18 percent of teaching staff in QIS-participating centers and 19 percent of teaching staff in non-QIS-participating centers had an associate degree. The heightened level of educational attainment across the sample at the bachelor's degree level may be a reflection of sample limitations within this study.

Forty-two percent of teaching staff in the sample had earned a degree outside of the United States. More than one-half (58 percent) of the teaching staff in the sample earned a domestic associate's degree or higher, with 41 percent possessing a bachelor's degree or master's degree from a university in the United States. Of those who had a degree of any level, 46 percent majored in Early Childhood Education, 11 percent in Elementary Education, 8 percent in Special Education, and 7 percent in Child Development or Psychology. The remaining one-quarter (28 percent) earned degrees in a range of other subjects.

Nearly all teaching staff (93 percent) reported having a current teaching credential. The most frequently cited credentials were the Florida Child Care Professional Credential (37 percent), the Florida Staff Credential (35 percent), the Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate (15 percent), and the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (14 percent). Twenty-one percent of teaching staff reported having the national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Note, respondents had the option of including more than one certification in their response.

Student Loan Debt

Accruing student loan debt can compound teaching staff's economic insecurity, particularly in light of low wages. Among all teaching staff in the sample:

- **13%** of the overall sample reported accruing student loan debt; and
- **64%** of teaching staff who reported student loan debt accrued $10,000 or less.

Notably, **42%** of teaching staff reported earning a degree from another country.

Table 1. Debt Assumed, by Highest Level of Education Completed

Highest Degree Completed	Student Loan Debt
High school diploma or GED	8%
Some college credit but no degree	28%
Associate degree	37%
Bachelor's degree	58%
Master's degree	47%

Table 2. Student Loan Debt, by Position

Student Loans (Y/N)	Assistant Teacher	Teacher
Yes	10%	24%
No	90%	76%
Amount	**Assistant Teacher**	**Teacher**
Less than $5,000	20%	29%
Between $5,000 and $10,000	60%	29%
Between $10,001 and $25,000	0%	29%
Between $25,001 and $50,000	0%	2%
More than $50,000	20%	12%

Tenure

Overall, teaching staff represented a range of experience, from teachers new to the profession to others with many years in the field and at their current place of employment.

Table 3. Teaching Staff Tenure

	1 Year or Less	2-5 Years	6-15 Years	16-20 Years	More Than 20 Years
Number of years in the field	5%	13%	48%	20%	14%
Number of years at current place of employment	17%	28%	41%	8%	6%
Number of years in current position at current place of employment	17%	39%	34%	4%	6%

Compensation

Wages

The median hourly wage of teaching staff in the SEQUAL study was $10.00, with 50 percent reporting an hourly wage of less than $10.00 and just 11 percent earning more than $15.00 an hour. Teaching staff working in centers located in middle-to-high-income census tracts reported higher wages than teaching staff working in low-income census tracts (median wage of $11.00 per hour compared to $9.50 per hour, respectively).

According to the 2018 *Early Childhood Workforce Index*, the Florida state hourly median wage for all child care workers in 2017 was $10.09; $11.70 an hour for preschool teachers compared with kindergarten and elementary-school teachers, who earned hourly wages of $27.06 and $27.23, respectively. Though the wages reported in the *Index* are drawn from a larger swath of early educators, including those working in home-based settings, the wages among teaching staff in the SEQUAL sample are comparable. The median hourly wage for teaching staff with a bachelor's degree in the sample was $11.18, nearly two-and-a-half times less than hourly earnings for kindergarten teachers with similar educational attainment.

Wages by Teacher Characteristics

While wages were low across the teaching staff in the sample, variations exist in the following categories:

- **Tenure:** Teachers who have worked in the field for 20 years or more and at their current places of employment for more than 10 years were more likely to earn more than $10.00 an hour, compared to teachers with less tenure. Still, the median hourly wage for this group was only $10.80.
- **Age of Children Served:** The median hourly wage for teaching staff working with mixed age groups was $9.33; for teachers working with infants and toddlers exclusively, $10.00; and for teachers of three- and four-year-olds, $11.00.
- **QIS Participation:** Teaching staff employed at centers participating in the county QIS earned a median hourly wage of $10.00, compared to teaching staff working in centers not participating in the QIS, who reported earning a median wage of $11.00 an hour.
- **Educational Attainment:** The median hourly wage for teaching staff with a high school diploma or GED was $9.00; for those with some college credit or an associate degree, $10.00; and for those with a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, $11.18.
- **Work in Low-Income Zones:** Teaching staff employed at centers in low-income census tracts earned, on average, $1.50 an hour less than teaching staff employed at centers in middle-to-high-income census tracts. Annualized for a full-time, full year-position, this $1.50 wage differential amounts to more than $3,000.
- **Compensation by Educational Attainment and Census Tract Income Level:** Teaching staff employed at centers located in low-income census tracts earned less than teaching staff employed at centers in middle-to-high-income census tracts. It should also be noted that 33 percent of teaching staff employed at centers in low-income census tracts held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 50 percent of teaching staff at centers in middle-to-high-income census tracts. This finding suggests that educational attainment may partially account for observed disparities in wages. That said, teaching staff employed in middle-to-high-income tracts who held a bachelor's degree or higher still earned higher wages (with a median hourly wage of $14.58) than those employed in low-income tracts with the same educational attainment (median hourly wage of $11.50). This finding suggests a pay disparity for those working in centers located in low-income areas compared to those in middle-to-high-income areas, even when educational attainment is equivalent.

Public Income Supports

Reflecting their low wages, 53 percent of teaching staff in the sample resided in families that utilized at least one form of federal public support, such as Federal Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid (for themselves), Healthy Families or Medical/Medicaid for Children, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as "food stamps"). This rate is more than double the national rate of participation for all workers.[xvii] Among teaching staff in the sample who held a bachelor's degree exclusively, 38 percent resided in families that utilized at least one form of federal public support.

Benefits

Health Care

Twenty-eight percent of teaching staff reported that they had no health coverage from any source. Among the 72 percent of teaching staff in the sample who reported having health coverage, less than one-half (41 percent) reported receiving insurance through their employer. Common sources of health insurance were coverage under the Affordable Care Act/Health Plan Marketplace or the policy of a parent or spouse. Teaching staff employed at QIS-participating centers reported a higher average percentage of respondents covered by health insurance from any source (75 percent), compared to teaching staff employed at centers not participating in the QIS (67 percent).

Furthermore, 47 percent of teaching staff reported that in the past few years, they or a family member had gone without medical care due to the cost of treatment. Teaching staff who did not speak English fluently, those between the ages of 30 and 39, and those fulfilling head or lead teacher roles were more likely to report they had gone without medical treatment due to cost.

Vacation and Leave

A majority of staff members (90 percent) reported that they receive paid holidays and leave during the year. Most of the sample (81 percent) reported that they could use their paid leave for either sick or vacation days. Although teaching staff reported a range of days, the median paid days off was seven days for holidays and 9.5 days for vacation and sick leave.

Program Leaders

In addition to providing information on the center's characteristics, program leaders shared information about their own personal and professional characteristics. While the person most likely to fill out the survey held an administrative position (77 percent), such as center director, assistant director, or site supervisor, almost one-quarter (23 percent) held another leadership role at the center, such as educational coordinator or teacher-director. All program leaders in our sample identified as female. Program leaders ranged in age from 23 to 66 years old, with a mean age of 48. One-half (51 percent) of program leaders who filled out the survey worked in centers in low-income census tracts, and nearly one-half (44 percent) headed centers participating in the QIS. To learn more, please see **Appendix A: Study Design**.

Program leaders as a group were less racially/ethnically diverse than teaching staff. By racial/ethnic breakdown, 67 percent identified as white (Hispanic/Latino), 15 percent as white (non-Hispanic/Latino), 11 percent as black or African American (non-Hispanic/Latino), and 7 percent as other (Hispanic/Latino). Program leaders were more likely than teaching staff to be born in the United States. Mirroring teaching staff, 71 percent of program leaders reported speaking Spanish fluently, while 49 percent reported being fluent in English. Most program leaders (72 percent) held a bachelor's degree or higher, with around one-half (53 percent) majoring in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Psychology. Overall, program leaders had a wealth of experience in the field, with 65 percent working in early care and education for 16 years or more. The median hourly wage for program leaders was $20.00, and for center directors, $19.62.

Compared to teaching staff, program leaders identifying as center director were less likely to have student loan debt. Of those who did have student loan debt (31 percent), most had debt in excess of $10,000.

For a more detailed description of program leaders, please see **Appendix B: Description of Program Leaders**.

Comparisons Among Teaching Staff and Program Leaders

Note: Center directors (n=45) were used for comparison in the following tables.

Table 4. Educational Background, by Position

Highest Level of Education	Assistant Teacher	Teacher	Center Director
Less than a high school diploma or GED	0%	0%	0%
High school diploma or GED	21%	13%	3%
Some college credit but no degree	36%	24%	9%
Associate degree	15%	21%	18%
Bachelor's degree	26%	32%	26%
Master's degree	2%	10%	38%
Doctoral degree	0%	0%	6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	28%	42%	70%
Number of staff	76	204	45

Table 5. Race and Ethnicity, by Position

Race/Ethnicity	Assistant Teacher	Teacher	Center Director
White (Hispanic/Latino)	80%	67%	67%
White (non-Hispanic/Latino)	7%	12%	15%
Black (non-Hispanic/Latino)	11%	10%	11%
All other (Hispanic/Latino)	0%	8%	7%
All other (non-Hispanic/Latino)	2%	3%	0%

Table 6. Hourly Wage, by Position

Wage (Median)	Assistant Teacher	Teacher	Center Director
Hourly	$10.00	$10.00	$19.62

A Guide to SEQUAL Findings

Teaching staff assessments of their work environments are reported separately for each of the five SEQUAL domains: Teaching Supports; Learning Community; Job Crafting; Adult Well-Being; and Program Leadership. For each domain, we begin with a description of the domain and why it is important to teacher practice and development. Within domains, findings are presented for each dimension (note that domains vary with regard to the number of dimensions). Reporting on each domain is organized as follows:

Domain and Dimension Scores

- Mean scores, representing an aggregate of teaching staff responses, are provided for each SEQUAL dimension and domain. Results for each domain represent an aggregate of staff perceptions across sites, and therefore, the prevalence of issues identified will vary by site. Means are calculated according to a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Unless noted, higher scores reflect that a positive work environment condition is in place or can be reliably depended upon.

What Teaching Staff Said

- Percentage of teaching staff who agree or disagree with individual items describing various workplace policies, practices, and relationships in a given dimension (see "Interpreting Agreement and Disagreement With SEQUAL Items," p. 27).

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Implications of teaching staff assessments.

Findings by Site and Teacher Characteristics

- Relationship between SEQUAL domain and dimension scores and program characteristics, including the center's participation in other support initiatives and location by census tract income level.
- Relationship between SEQUAL domain and dimension scores and teacher characteristics, including position, tenure, race/ethnicity, and age group in the classroom.

Interpreting Agreement and Disagreement With SEQUAL Items

The SEQUAL survey presents statements, and teaching staff are asked to indicate agreement or disagreement. In almost all cases, teaching staff agreement with an item signals that a positive work environment condition is in place or can be reliably depended upon, while disagreement indicates a lack of support for various work environment conditions necessary for teachers to apply their knowledge and skills and continue to hone their practice. We note the few instances in which agreement signals a less-supportive environment.

All SEQUAL items are rated on a six-point scale, with designations of "strongly agree," "agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Throughout the report, "agree" combines both strongly agree and agree responses. Likewise, "disagree" combines both strongly disagree and disagree responses. "Somewhat disagree" and "somewhat agree" are handled differently depending on the item and the meaning that the responses convey. We sometimes combine the somewhat responses with the overall agree or disagree items, while at other times we report out the percentage of staff who "somewhat agree" or "disagree," if we determine that the additional detail provides greater understanding of the item.

On a few items, we combine somewhat agree with disagree responses. For example, when teaching staff respond that they "somewhat agree" that they have access to a working computer, the somewhat designation suggests that a computer it is not dependably available. In our judgment, "somewhat agree" in this case would not be considered agreement. In another example, if staff "somewhat agree" that bullying is not tolerated in their program, it signals that bullying may be tolerated under some conditions. Similarly, when teaching staff indicate they "somewhat agree" or "somewhat disagree" that bullying is tolerated among staff at their workplace, we interpret somewhat responses negatively because they signal some degree of tolerance for behavior that is detrimental to teaching staff.

FINDINGS

DOMAIN 1: TEACHING SUPPORTS

Domain Score: 4.81/6

The Teaching Supports domain includes a range of workplace tools that influence teaching practice. Varied in nature — ranging from specific materials and resources to levels of staffing and dedicated time for observation, planning, and sharing with colleagues — teaching supports constitute essential conditions for enabling teaching staff to apply their knowledge and skills. When such supports are missing or undependable, their absence undermines efforts to improve or sustain program quality and places additional burdens on the complex and demanding work of teaching, which includes meeting the varied needs of individual children in the classroom.

Dimension 1: Curriculum

Score: 4.98/6

The Curriculum dimension examines whether a program has articulated an approach to guide teacher practice and assesses whether teaching staff consider themselves adequately trained to apply the approach or curriculum to their planning and teaching.

What Teaching Staff Said

Almost all teaching staff reported that their program had a curriculum in place that tied directly to daily activities in the classroom.

- Nearly all teaching staff (**97 percent**) reported that their program had a curriculum in place to guide children's learning and teaching practices.
- The vast majority of teaching staff (**85 percent**) agreed that they can explain how daily activities are a part of their program's curriculum.
- **85 percent** of teaching staff agreed that their program's curriculum was helpful in deciding how to teach.

While the majority of staff members agreed that their program's curriculum helped them in the classroom, nearly one-quarter reported inconsistencies.

- While **78 percent** of teaching staff agreed that their program's curriculum was helpful in planning for individual children's needs, more than one-fifth (**22 percent**) of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed.
- Though **76 percent** of teaching staff reported receiving training in how to use their program's curriculum, nearly one-quarter (**24 percent**) disagreed that such training was reliably available.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Curriculum provides teaching teams with an organizing framework that identifies and guides the content and processes teaching staff follow to reach specific learning outcomes.

- In the absence of a curriculum or in the case of a curriculum that is not well understood or utilized, teaching staff pursue various instructional approaches that may work at cross purposes, making it more difficult to achieve learning outcomes.

- A supportive work environment provides ongoing training and support to ensure that teaching staff can implement curriculum effectively.

Dimension 2: Child Observation and Assessment Score: 4.81/6

The Child Observation and Assessment dimension examines the training, support, and resources teaching staff are provided to assist them in understanding and recording children's behavior and development.

What Teaching Staff Said

Nearly all teaching staff reported regularly conducting observations and agreed that there was a process in place for assessing children's learning and development within their program.

- Almost all teaching staff reported that their program had a process in place for assessing children's development and learning (**93 percent**), and most staff members agreed that they regularly conduct assessments (**84 percent**) that help them to decide what the children in their classrooms need (**89 percent**).

Fewer staff members agreed they had received training on how to use assessments and observations to talk with families about their children or that they receive ongoing guidance on how to use this information to inform their teaching.

- Though three-quarters (**77 percent**) of teaching staff agreed that they have been trained on how to use assessments and observations to talk with families about their children, **23 percent** reported such training to be inconsistently available.
- While **78 percent** reported that they receive ongoing guidance on how to use the information from assessments and observations in their teaching, **22 percent** reported this guidance as unreliable.

> **"Teachers share observations involving […] groups of children, as well as completing observations of each child in their classroom. The observations are used to create individual goals for children. Activities are incorporated in lesson plans to help each child reach their teacher's goals and their maximum potential."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Observations and assessments provide valuable information about children's development that can be used to tailor teaching strategies to support individual children's socioemotional, physical, and cognitive development.

- When teaching staff are not well trained or provided adequate time to complete observations and assessments, inaccurate conclusions may be drawn about children's current abilities or progress towards developmental milestones, and/or developmental delays requiring specialized interventions may not be identified.

Dimension 3: Materials and Equipment Score: 5.03/6

The Materials and Equipment dimension examines whether the equipment, toys, and consumable supplies available are appropriate, accessible, and kept in good condition.

What Teaching Staff Said

One-quarter of teaching staff reported access to appropriate equipment and materials for children and staff as unreliable.

- **26 percent** of teaching staff reported the availability of a working computer/printer for staff use at their program as unreliable.
- **17 percent** of teaching staff reported that equipment and materials appropriate to the needs of children in their classrooms were not reliably available.

The distribution of materials and supplies across classrooms and timely repair or replacement of broken equipment were areas of concern.

- Though **79 percent** of teaching staff reported that materials and supplies within their program are shared fairly across classrooms, **21 percent** reported fair sharing as undependable.
- **69 percent** of teaching staff reported that equipment and materials in their program are quickly repaired or replaced when broken. However, nearly one out of three staff members reported that repair or replacement is inconsistent (**31 percent**).

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Classroom materials are essential in creating an enriching and engaging environment that allows children to explore, play, and learn.
- When children do not have access to appropriate materials, it may impact their physical, socioemotional, and cognitive development.
- Teaching staff need access to materials and equipment (such as computers, printers, and copy machines) in order to prepare instructional materials, access online resources, engage in online professional development activities, and increasingly, communicate with families.

Dimension 4: Support Services for Children and Families Score: 4.96/6

The Support Services dimension examines the training, resources, and assistance available to enable teaching staff to respond to the individual needs of the children and families in their program.

What Teaching Staff Said

In the event of an issue with children or families, as many as one in five staff members reported a shortage of available support from supervisors or coworkers.

- While the vast majority (**85 percent**) of teaching staff agreed that in the event of a problem with a child, they could rely on supervisors or coworkers for help, **15 percent** reported this assistance as inconsistent.
- Though **82 percent** agreed that they could depend on the support of supervisors or coworkers in the event of a problem with a family, **18 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.
- **81 percent** of teaching staff agreed that if they had a problem communicating with children or their families due to a language barrier, sufficient resources were available to find outside help, but **19 percent** reported such resources to be insufficiently available.

Resources related to supporting family needs — including training in teaching children who exhibit challenging behaviors, training in supporting dual language learners, and training in supporting family needs — were reported as less reliable.

- **35 percent** of teaching staff reported that resources for training in teaching children with challenging behaviors was insufficient.
- **34 percent** rated the availability of training for supporting family needs as inconsistent.
- **30 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that sufficient training was available for teaching children who are dual language learners.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Teaching staff need additional training, support, and often, access to outside resources (such as mental health or developmental consultations) to effectively meet the needs of children and their families.

- Support from coworkers and supervisors is an important element in ensuring effective interactions with children and families but may not be sufficient in some instances.

Dimension 5: Staffing and Professional Responsibilities Score: 4.55/6

The Staffing and Professional Responsibilities dimension examines the stability of teaching staff and the extent to which they are trained to meet their responsibilities. This dimension also examines how much time teaching staff have for planning, peer-to-peer discussion, attention to individual children, and completion of required paperwork.

What Teaching Staff Said

Teaching staff responses revealed shortages in staff coverage.

- Though **68 percent** of teaching staff agreed that there were enough staff available to help during breaks and special projects, **32 percent** reported insufficient coverage during these times.
- **44 percent** of teaching staff reported that staff coverage was insufficient to give children in their classroom individual attention.
- **40 percent** reported that, when staff are absent, trained substitutes/floaters are unreliably available.

> **"La mayoría del tiempo trabajé sola por el constante cambio de personal y por falta de personal, teniendo dificultad de poner en práctica las enseñanzas adquiridas."**
>
> [Most of the time, I worked alone and had difficulty putting into practice the lessons learned due to the constant change of personnel and lack thereof].
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

A lack of trained staff within programs may be exacerbated by teaching staff turnover.

- **73 percent** of teaching staff agreed that in the event of turnover, everything possible would be done to hire qualified new staff members, but **27 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that such action would be taken.
- **42 percent** of teaching staff reported that if turnover were to occur, they could not reliably depend on new staff being hired quickly.

Professional responsibilities essential to effective teaching are challenging to accomplish during the paid workday when coverage is insufficient, as teaching staff responses indicate.

- Only **53 percent** of teaching staff reported having dedicated time, without responsibility for children, to discuss work-related issues with other teachers.
- **39 percent** reported that in the last week, they did not reliably have paid time, without responsibility for children, for doing paperwork or planning during paid work hours.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Each classroom needs an appropriate number of trained staff consistently in place in order to meet children's immediate needs and to allow teaching staff to fulfill their other responsibilities related to curriculum and assessments.

- When staffing in a classroom is insufficient or unreliable, it challenges the ability of educators to attend to individual children's needs or to provide a stable and nurturing learning environment for all the children in their care.

- Teaching staff need dedicated time, without child responsibilities, to plan curriculum, conduct observations and assessments, share with one another, and complete required paperwork.

Variations in Teaching Supports Findings by Site and Teacher Characteristics

To further explore the meaning of teaching staff assessments of their work environments, we explored variations in how SEQUAL scores for the Teaching Supports domain and dimensions varied by site and teacher characteristics. Specifically, we examined differences in assessments among teaching staff based on whether the center in which they worked participated in the county QIS, the number of other support initiatives in which their center participated, and the census income tract in which the center was located (i.e., low- or middle-to-high income). We also examined differences in ratings based on teaching staff position, years employed at the center, race and ethnicity,[xviii] and age groups served. Only significant findings for the domain and dimension are reported below.

Variations by Site Characteristics

Teaching Supports Domain Scores

Differences were found among teaching staff working in centers participating in the QIS on the overall Teaching Supports domain.[xix] Teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers reported higher mean scores on this domain (4.87/6), compared to teaching staff not working in QIS-participating centers (4.44/6).

Teaching Supports Dimension Scores

- On the Curriculum dimension, differences were found among teaching staff working in centers based on participation in the QIS.[xx] Teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers reported higher mean scores (5.01/6), compared to teaching staff working in non-QIS-participating centers (4.39/6).

- On the Support Services for Children and Families dimension, differences were found among teaching staff working in centers based on participation in the QIS.[xxi] Teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers reported higher scores (5.09/6), compared to teaching staff working in non-QIS-participating centers (4.59/6).

- On the Supports Services for Children and Families dimension, differences were found among centers not participating in the QIS based on their participation in a number of other support initiatives.[xxii] Among centers not participating in the QIS, significant differences were found between centers participating in two or more other support initiatives (4.97/6) and centers participating in zero support initiatives (5.30/6), compared to centers that participated in one support initiative (4.30/6). Teaching staff employed at non-QIS-participating centers that participated in two or more support initiatives or no initiative, reported higher mean scores compared to teaching staff working at non-QIS-participating centers that participated in one support initiative.

Variations by Teaching Staff Characteristics

Teaching Supports Domain Scores

No differences in teaching staff assessments were found on overall Teaching Supports domain scores by teacher position, tenure on the job, or ages of children served.

Teaching Supports Dimension Scores

- On the Curriculum dimension, differences were found among teaching staff based on race and ethnicity. Teaching staff who identified as Hispanic/Latino reported higher mean curriculum scores (5.11/6), compared to teaching staff who did not identify as Hispanic/Latino (4.76/6).

- On the Staffing and Professional Responsibilities dimension, differences were found by position.[xxiv] Assistant teachers scored higher (4.70/6), compared to teachers (4.23/6). This finding may reflect the additional responsibilities of teachers compared to assistant teachers and the impact these additional responsibilities have on their time, particularly in completing work during paid work hours.

Domain Score:

DOMAIN 2: LEARNING COMMUNITY 4.39/6

The Learning Community domain addresses conditions that strengthen and refine teaching practice. Encompassing issues of policy, practice, and relationships, a professional learning community involves opportunities to participate in relevant training, occasion to practice emerging skills, and encouragement for testing new strategies and ideas. Effective learning and implementation of new approaches to teaching requires engagement among colleagues across all roles in the organization. When learning opportunities fail to address classroom challenges, allow for opportunities to practice and reflect, or engage all members of the team, adult learning and organizational improvement are stalled and less likely to be sustained.

Dimension 1: Professional Development Opportunities Score: 4.21/6

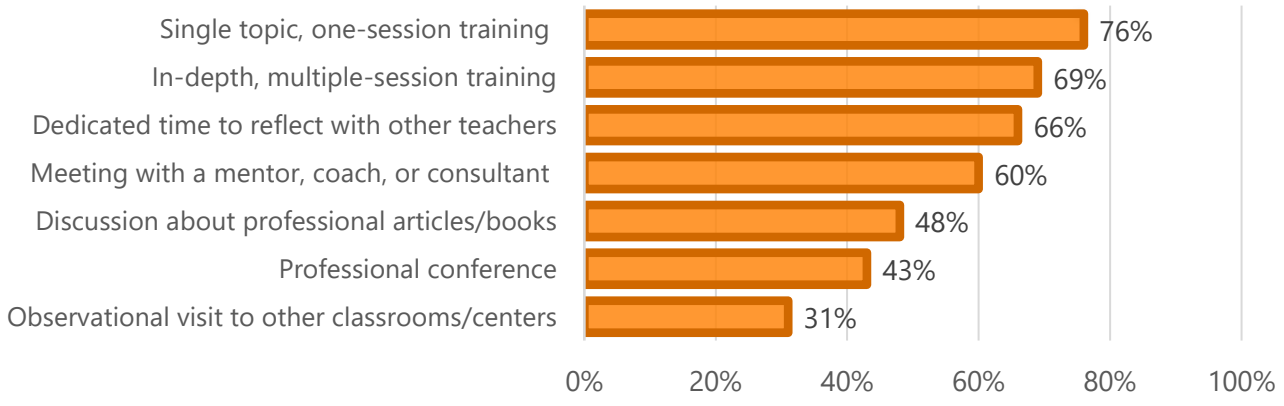
The Professional Development Opportunities dimension examines types of professional learning experiences and supports available to teaching staff.

What Teaching Staff Said

Teaching staff were asked whether they had participated in any professional development activities over the past year and, if so, to indicate the types of activities (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2

Professional Development Opportunities



While the majority of teaching staff (76 percent) agreed that they had participated in at least one professional learning opportunity in the past year, more than one-third (35 percent) reported that they did not have a choice in the form of professional development in which they took part.

Access to professional learning opportunities was limited by personal cost burden and a lack of flexibility in employer scheduling.

- **44 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that in the past year, their employer paid for a portion of their professional development expenses.
- **44 percent** reported that in the past year, the ability to adjust their work schedule to participate in professional development opportunities was unreliable.

> **"Professional development helps put the theory into practice through examples shared and discussions with support from other staff."**
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Adult learners find learning experiences to be most meaningful when they participate in the design or selection of these activities.

- Conducting professional development activities during paid work hours — or providing a stipend for engaging in these experiences outside of work hours —demonstrates an employer's commitment to ongoing learning and reduces the personal financial burden associated with these activities. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) recommended in 2018 that payment for professional development and education not be the responsibility of teachers, given their low wages.

Dimension 2: Applying Learning

Score: 4.55/6

The Applying Learning dimension examines teaching staff assessments of opportunities and support for trying new approaches to teaching and examines how staff stability and relationships may interfere with trying new approaches.

What Teaching Staff Said

Most staff members agreed that they feel comfortable trying new approaches to teaching, however, fewer agreed that their coworkers support them doing so. Staff dynamics and stability were other factors that make it difficult to explore new methods of teaching. Taken together, these conditions reveal that many barriers may be inhibiting teachers from their exploration of new teaching methods.

- The vast majority of staff members (**84 percent**) reported feeling comfortable trying new approaches to teaching.
- While nearly two-thirds of staff members reported that other teaching staff in their classroom are interested in trying new ways to teach, **35 percent** reported that such interest from other teachers in exploring new methods was inconsistent.
- **48 percent** agreed or somewhat agreed that frequent staff changes make it difficult to try new ways to teach.

> **"I have been given professional development tools to integrate into my class including: books, toys, decor and more. I include these in daily activities. The challenge is finding free time to create these activities."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- In order for teaching staff to be able to translate learning experiences into teaching practice, they need to feel supported in experimenting with new ideas and concepts.
- When a work environment is unstable, either due to internal conflict and/or staff turnover, it creates a barrier to quality improvement and undermines investments in training and professional development.
- In order to integrate learning experiences into real-world applications, teaching staff need opportunities for reflection, peer-to-peer learning, and observation of other classrooms.

Variations in Learning Community Findings by Site and Teacher Characteristics

To further explore the meaning of teaching staff assessments of their work environments, we explored variations in how SEQUAL scores for the Learning Supports domain and dimensions varied by site and teacher characteristics. Specifically, we examined differences in assessments among teaching staff based on whether the center in which they worked participated in the county QIS, the number of other support initiatives in which their center participated, and the census income tract in which the center was located (i.e., low- or middle-to-high income). We also examined differences in ratings based on teaching staff position, years employed at the center, race and ethnicity, and age groups served. Only significant findings for the domain and dimension are presented below.

Variations by Site Characteristics

Learning Community Domain Scores

No differences in teaching staff assessments were found on the overall Learning Community domain or dimension scores by participation in the QIS, other support initiatives, or income tract.

Variations by Teaching Staff Characteristics

Learning Community Domain Scores

No differences in teaching staff assessments were found on the overall Learning Community domain or dimension scores by teacher position, tenure on the job, race or ethnicity, or ages of children served.

DOMAIN 3: JOB CRAFTING

Domain Score: 4.57/6

The Job Crafting domain focuses on workplace practices and relationships that support individual teaching staff in expressing how their work is done and sharing decisions that impact their classrooms and the larger organization. When teaching staff consider themselves part of a well-functioning team and feel they have a meaningful say in how their classrooms operate, they are more able to engage in the reflection, creative problem-solving, and innovation necessary for continuous quality improvement. Both morale and performance improve in workplaces where employees feel well informed about program policies and changes and can identify that there is a clear process for giving input into organization-wide decisions that impact their day-to-day jobs, When teamwork and avenues for input are lacking or input is not seriously considered, morale and engagement decrease, while turnover increases.

Dimension 1: Decision Making

Score: 4.58/6

The Decision Making dimension examines the authority or input that teaching staff have on classroom composition and on establishing and adjusting schedules.

What Teaching Staff Said

Though most staff members made decisions on classroom composition and their materials, a substantial number indicated less autonomy in shifting planned activities and hosting visitors.

- The majority of staff members (**79 percent**) reported the ability to choose materials and arrange their classroom space.
- **76 percent** of teaching staff reported freedom of choice in making changes to planned activities when needed, though notably nearly one-quarter (**24 percent)** did not.
- Fewer staff members (**35 percent**) reported having a choice regarding when outside observations, excluding visits from families, were made in their classroom.

> **"I would like to be able to decide when a new student can come into the class to observe or test for the day so as to not throw off the rest of the day for the other students."**
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Children's developmental needs are constantly changing, and teaching staff need to feel comfortable adjusting their environment and teaching strategies frequently, based on their observations and professional assessments. Teaching staff need to know that they have relative autonomy to make decisions about materials, room arrangement, and planned activities.

- Outside visitors may impact the activities and schedule within a classroom, and teaching staff need to identify optimal times for visitors to conduct observations.

Dimension 2: Teamwork

Score: 5.15/6

The Teamwork dimension examines teaching staff assessments of coworkers' respect for one another's opinions and whether they collaborate effectively in planning and implementing learning experiences for children.

What Teaching Staff Said

While the vast majority of staff members reported working well together as a team in the *classroom*, fractures were identified at the *program* level related to fair consideration and fair treatment.

- **86 percent** of staff members agreed that teaching staff in their classrooms consider themselves to be part of a team and that the opinions of all teaching staff in their classroom are considered fairly, while **14 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.
- **85 percent** of teaching staff agreed that all staff members are responsible for their share of the work, yet the remaining **15 percent** reported this situation as inconsistent.
- **79 percent** reported that teaching staff in their classroom work well with those in other classrooms, though **21 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.

> **"Working with positive staff members has the place run smooth. Having monthly meetings with staff mentors and parents makes a great team."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Each early educator has their own unique philosophy and perspective on how to achieve learning outcomes for children. An effective high-quality classroom begins with a teaching team that respects one another's approaches and teaching styles and works together to meet the needs of their children and families.
- Effective teamwork contributes to classroom and program stability by improving teachers' effectiveness and job satisfaction. Cultivating this camaraderie requires dedicated paid time for professional sharing and peer-to-peer learning among teaching staff.
- Conflict within a program, at the classroom or administrative level, may occur when different ideas and approaches are not acknowledged and respected. In severe cases, animosity or conflict among staff may be noticed by children and adversely affect classroom behavior and learning opportunities.

Dimension 3: Input

Score: 3.97/6

The Input dimension examines teaching staff perceptions related to the ability to influence work policies that impact their practices.

What Teaching Staff Said

Teaching staff reported being kept well informed on administrative policies but receiving fewer opportunities for input into decisions that directly impact their classrooms and practice.

- While **70 percent** of teaching staff agreed they are kept well informed about program *policies*, fewer staff members (**65 percent**) agreed they are kept well informed of program *changes*.
- **69 percent** of teaching staff reported having input into decisions about the classroom in which they would be teaching, though nearly one-third (**31 percent**) disagreed or only somewhat agreed.
- Far fewer staff members (**36 percent**) reported receiving input into children's classroom placements.

> **"When you have the ability to make choices regarding day-to-day practices, it gives you confidence as well as a sense of responsibility."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Teaching staff received limited opportunities to contribute to decisions that affected all staff members and their work.

- **56 percent** of teaching staff reported that there was a clear process for staff members to have a say in decisions that impact their work.
- **51 percent** of teaching staff agreed that all staff members are invited to have input into program policies that affect everyone.
- Just **25 percent** of teaching staff agreed that staff members have input into how funds or resources are used.

> **"Me gustaría más oportunidades en las decisiones de mi salón."**
>
> [I would like more opportunities to be involved in the decisions of my own classroom].
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Having clear information on the areas of program and classroom decisions in which teaching staff can provide input is an important component to creating a supportive work environment.

- Opportunities to make decisions or to provide input on staff and child assignments, scheduling, room arrangement, and curriculum provide teaching staff with a needed level of control over their classrooms and the learning environments they create.

- Based on their direct knowledge and experience, teaching staff are a valuable resource in determining the appropriate classroom and teachers for children.

- Teaching staff provide a unique perspective on classroom and program needs and should be consulted on prioritizing how resources are used and what materials or supplies are needed.

- Failure to consider or respect teaching staff perspectives impacts staff morale and can lead to decreased job satisfaction and an increase in staff turnover.

Variations in Job Crafting Findings by Site and Teacher Characteristics

To further explore the meaning of teaching staff assessments of their work environments, we explored variations in how SEQUAL scores for the Job Crafting domain and dimensions varied by site and teacher characteristics. Specifically, we examined differences in assessments among teaching staff based on whether the center in which they worked participated in the county QIS, the number of other support initiatives in which their center participated, and the census income tract in which the center was located (i.e., low- or middle-to-high income). We also examined differences in ratings based on teaching staff position, years employed at the center, race and ethnicity, and age groups served. Only significant findings for the domain and dimensions are reported below.

Variations by Site Characteristics

Job Crafting Domain Scores

There were no significant differences in Job Crafting domain or dimension scores by participation in the QIS, other support initiatives, or income tract.

Variations by Teaching Staff Characteristics

Job Crafting Domain Scores

There were no significant differences in Job Crafting domain scores by teacher position, tenure on the job, race or ethnicity, or ages of children served.

Job Crafting Dimension Scores

- On the Teamwork dimension, differences were found by position.[xxv] Assistant teachers had higher mean scores (5.45), compared to teachers (5.06). The item with the most variability among teaching staff by position asked whether teaching staff in their classroom considered themselves a team. Almost all assistant teachers (93 percent) agreed with this item, while fewer teachers agreed (83 percent).

DOMAIN 4: ADULT WELL-BEING

Domain Score: 4.16/6

The Adult Well-Being domain encompasses the economic security and wellness of teaching staff, as well as their interactions with one another, all of which are influenced by policies, practices, and relationships. Low pay and inadequate benefits common to most early childhood jobs contribute to financial worry and insecurity among many staff members. Poor compensation is often exacerbated by expectations to complete job tasks during unpaid time or to work when ill, undependable breaks or schedules, and the absence of financial reward for professional advancement. Teaching young children is physically demanding work, which also includes continual exposure to illness, and requires that teaching staff be trained to protect their health and assured appropriate ergonomic equipment as well as adequate sick leave and vacations.

The tenor of relationships among colleagues in a site is another important contributor to teacher well-being, influencing the ability of staff to work effectively as a team. In a climate of respect and fairness, well-being can protect against or even alleviate stress, but such dynamics as favoritism and unresolved conflict can exacerbate it. In addition, children's well-being and learning are directly influenced by the emotional and physical well-being experienced by the adults primarily responsible for their education and care. When adults experience high levels of stress, there is a greater likelihood that they will be unable to engage children in developmentally supportive interactions that contribute to their learning.

Dimension 1: Economic Well-Being

Score: 3.47/6

The Economic Well-Being dimension examines the dependability of workplace pay and benefit policies (e.g., receiving paid time for work responsibilities and professional development) and the degree to which teaching staff worry about financial security (e.g., their ability to afford food for their families and housing and retirement costs).

What Teaching Staff Said

About Economic Worry

For items related to economic worry, stronger agreement, rather than disagreement, indicated higher levels of worry.

Teaching staff reported concern about their ability to pay for basic living expenses.

- **78 percent** of staff members reported worrying about paying housing costs.
- **70 percent** reported that they worry about having enough food for their families.

Worry about the ability to provide for themselves and their families was widespread.

- **81 percent** of teaching staff reported worrying about having enough to pay their family's monthly bills.
- **80 percent** reported that they worry about paying for their household's routine health care costs.
- **65 percent** of teaching staff reported worrying about losing pay if they or someone in their family became ill, and **60 percent** reported worrying about taking time off from work to take care of family issues.

Food Insecurity

Seventy percent of teachers worry about having enough food to feed their families on a monthly basis.

> **"El sueldo no me alcanza para pagar costos de vivienda, carro, y alimentación lo que afecta mi concentración a la hora de enseñanza."**
>
> [The salary is not enough to pay living, car, and food expenses, which affects my concentration in teaching].
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

One-half of teaching staff reported job security as an area of concern.

- **55 percent** of teaching staff reported worrying about being sent home without pay if child attendance was low or if their program had an unexpected closure.
- Nearly one-half of teaching staff reported that they worry about having their job benefits reduced (**47 percent**), getting laid off from work (**47 percent**), or having their hours reduced (**46 percent**).

Most staff members did not see their jobs as a likely source for improving their financial situation in the long term. In fact, across the board, compensation and long-term financial well-being were reflected as common worries.

- **86 percent** agreed or somewhat agreed that they worry about having enough savings for retirement.
- **77 percent** reported uncertainty about not getting a raise.

What Teaching Staff Said

About Dependability of Policies

In the following section, "disagree" and "somewhat agree" are interpreted as negative responses and an indication of a lack of reliable policies. Therefore, in the percentages that follow, "disagree" and "somewhat agree" ratings have been reported in combination. For a more in-depth explanation, see page 27, "Interpreting Agreement and Disagreement With SEQUAL Items."

Many staff members reported compensation for professional development and job-related activities outside of work hours as undependable.

- Nearly two-thirds (**64 percent**) of teaching staff reported that they could not depend on compensation for routine professional activities, including work outside of regular work hours, parent conferences, and evening or weekend events.
- Less than one-half (**49 percent**) of teaching staff reported that they could depend on having planning time during their paid work hours when they were not responsible for children.
- **46 percent** reported that payment for any required professional development activities was unreliable.
- Less than one-half of teaching staff surveyed agreed they could depend on increased compensation for completing a degree (**45 percent**) or for being promoted to a position with more responsibility (**43 percent**).

> **"Your health, mood, and general well-being affect your ability to be an effective and motivated teacher. It affects your energy, as well as the resources you can afford to buy for your kids that are not provided [by the center]."**
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a low-income census zone

Opportunities for teaching staff to take paid time off, take time off when ill, or even take their paid breaks were resources that could not be depended on.

- **51 percent** of teaching staff assessed the ability to take their paid breaks during the workday as undependable, although required by law in most instances.
- **41 percent** reported that they could not depend on using their paid sick leave when ill.

> **"Cuando estoy enferma o económicamente decadente mi trabajo no es igual que cuando mis necesidades están cubiertas."**
>
> [When I am ill or economically unstable, my work is not the same as when my needs are covered].
>
> – Teacher working in a Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Notably, taking paid leave to observe holidays or vacations was a resource that most teaching staff agreed they could depend on.

- **77 percent** of teaching staff reported that they could rely on taking paid time off for holidays, though nearly one-quarter of respondents (**23 percent**) found this benefit unreliable.
- **71 percent** of staff members reported that they could depend on taking paid time off for vacation, while the remaining **29 percent** assessed this resource as undependable.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- An important skill for teachers is the ability to have intentional interactions with children, requiring them to remain focused and present in the moment. Economic insecurity can cause significant stress and distract teachers from focusing on children's needs.

- A supportive teacher work environment recognizes the need for dedicated prep time and sets aside time and/or financial resources to support the professional responsibilities of teaching staff.

- The stress caused by low pay and inadequate benefits is often exacerbated by expectations to complete job tasks during unpaid time or to work when ill, as teaching staff cannot afford to take time off. Undependable breaks or schedules and the absence of financial reward for professional advancement can also serve as additional stressors and drive turnover.

- Regular breaks are necessary for all workers, and early educators are no exception. In a field in which teaching staff are required to be alert and responsive to children throughout the day, it is important for programs to have practices in place that ensure teaching staff can depend on regular breaks and can stay home when they are ill. Paid leave for vacation and holidays are also key policies that help to alleviate stress and prevent staff burnout.

Dimension 2: Wellness Supports Score: 4.72/6

The Wellness Supports domain examines the conditions and training available in the work environment to ensure safety and security for teaching staff.

What Teaching Staff Said

Nearly one in five staff members reported that equipment and policies designed to support teacher health and safety and minimize the likelihood of injury were not routinely available.

- **19 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that essential health materials, such as disposable gloves or aprons, were available without cost to teaching staff.
- **24 percent** of staff members disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their program provides a safe place to put their personal things.
- **14 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their program implements security measures (e.g., good lighting, locks) to ensure staff safety.

One in three staff members reported working in settings with insufficient supports for workplace cleanliness and physical comfort.

- **39 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their program arranges for classrooms to be cleaned by someone other than a member of the teaching staff.
- **32 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their program provides comfortable places for adults to sit and be with children.

Training to help prevent staff injury and illness and to support healthy behaviors was not universally available or comprehensive.

- Although three-quarters (**75 percent)** of teaching staff agreed that their program provides training for staff members about healthy ways to perform tasks — such as preparing food, lifting children, and moving heavy objects — one-quarter (**25 percent**) did not.
- Just one-half of teaching staff (**49 percent)** agreed that their program provides training for staff members on managing stress, healthy eating, and exercise.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Teaching staff need a supportive and safe environment with appropriate space and furnishings, break rooms, and secure places for their belongings. These are basic accommodations that contribute to teachers' feelings of security and well-being at work.

- Teaching in early education settings is an emotionally and physically demanding profession. Teaching staff need support in managing stress and living a healthy lifestyle.

- Teaching staff face multiple demands throughout the day, and when teachers are not provided support and opportunities to manage responsibilities, the system is susceptible to heightened staff turnover, which ultimately undermines program quality.

Dimension 3: Quality of Work Life

Score: 4.94/6

The Quality of Work Life domain examines how well teaching staff are supported and treated by other adults in their work environment.

What Teaching Staff Said

Interpersonal relationships greatly influence how teaching staff experience their jobs, with most staff members agreeing that they are treated with respect and support by coworkers.

- **87 percent** of teaching staff reported that their coworkers treat them with respect.
- **84 percent** agreed that their coworkers support them when they have personal issues.
- **83 percent** of staff members reported that their coworkers value their beliefs about teaching children, though **17 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.

At the program level, teaching staff reported mixed assessments of fairness in the workplace.

- **76 percent** of teaching staff agreed that all staff members are held responsible for doing their share of work. The remaining **24 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed, suggesting that a portion of staff may witness or experience issues of unfair expectations or unequal distribution of workload.
- Though **74 percent** agreed that bullying by other adults is not tolerated in their program, **26 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed, indicating that some staff members may be experiencing or observing intimidating interactions among teaching staff in their program.
- While **71 percent** of teaching staff agreed that no staff members receive preferential treatment at the expense of others, **29 percent** of respondents disagreed or only somewhat agreed.
- Just **65 percent** of teaching staff agreed that they are confident that their complaints (if voiced) would be considered fairly, leaving **35 percent** who disagreed or only somewhat agreed.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- In high-quality work environments, teaching staff feel that they are respected and treated fairly by their coworkers and leaders. When teaching staff work in a climate that allows bullying, includes favoritism, or has staff conflicts, this situation can create stress or exacerbate existing stress.

- When teaching staff perceive that their work is not valued or that others are being allowed to not meet their job responsibilities, it creates divisions among staff members and/or program leaders that adversely affect job performance and staff morale. These conditions can have a direct impact on interactions with children and the ability to create a nurturing environment, while simultaneously undercutting staff morale, contributing to turnover, and undermining program quality.

Variations in Adult Well-Being Findings by Site and Teacher Characteristics

To further explore the meaning of teaching staff assessments of their work environments, we explored variations in how SEQUAL scores for the Adult Well-Being domain and dimensions varied by site and teacher characteristics. Specifically, we examined differences in assessments among teaching staff based on whether the center in which they worked participated in the county QIS, the number of other support initiatives in which their center participated, and the census income tract in which the center was located (i.e., low- or middle-to-high income). We also examined differences in ratings based on teaching staff position, years employed at the center, race and ethnicity, and age groups served. For this domain, we also examined differences based on staff's hourly wages (i.e., those earning less than $10.00, those earning between $10.00 and $15.00, and those earning between $15.01 and $20.00). Only significant findings for the domain and dimension are reported below.

Variations by Site Characteristics

Adult Well-Being Domain Scores

No differences in teaching staff assessments were found on overall Adult Well-Being domain scores by participation in the QIS, other support initiatives, or income tract.

Adult Well-Being Dimension Scores

On the Wellness dimension, differences were found by participation in the QIS.[xxvi] Teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers scored higher (4.81/6), compared to those working in non-QIS-participating centers (4.18/6). For example, less than half (48 percent) of teaching staff working in non-QIS-participating centers agreed that their program provides a staff room or area away from children for breaks or private conversation, compared to two-thirds (67 percent) of teaching staff working in QIS-participating centers.

Variations by Teaching Staff Characteristics

Adult Well-Being Domain Scores

Examining by wage group (i.e., teaching staff earning less than $10.00, those earning between $10.00 and $15.00, and those earning between $15.01 and $20.00), differences emerged on the Adult Well-being domain.[xxvii] There were significant differences between teaching staff who earn the highest hourly wage and those who earn lower wages. Teaching staff earning less than $10 an hour had the lowest scores (4.04/6) followed by teaching staff earning between $10.01 and 15.00 (4.10/6) and teaching staff earning $15.01 or more (4.67/6).

Adult Well-Being Dimension Scores

On the Economic Well-Being dimension, differences were found by hourly wage. Differences were found between those earning the highest hourly wages and those earning the lowest hourly wages. Teaching staff earning below $10.00 had the lowest scores (3.74/6) followed by teaching staff earning between $10.01-$15.00 (4.16/6) and those earning $15.01 or more (4.93/6). Differences were also found by race and ethnicity. Teaching staff who identified as Hispanic/Latino reported greater levels of worry (4.22/6), compared to teaching staff who did not identify as Hispanic/Latino (3.77/6).

On the Wellness dimension, differences were found based on the age of children in their classroom.[xxviii] Teaching staff working exclusively with infants and toddlers had higher mean scores (4.90/6), compared to teaching staff working with mixed age groups (4.45/6). Scores for teaching staff working with older children (i.e., three- and four-year-olds) were not significant (4.64/6), compared to teaching staff working with younger or mixed age groups.

Domain Score:

DOMAIN 5: PROGRAM LEADERSHIP 4.94/6

The Program Leadership domain focuses on teaching staff assessments of other staff members who fulfill leadership functions that provide support and guidance to teacher practice. In center-based early care and education programs, leaders fulfill multiple functions. Here, we focus on supervision of teaching staff and oversight for daily operations of the site, which may be functions fulfilled by more than one person in a given site. When leaders are knowledgeable about child development and pedagogy, engaged in learning themselves, considered to be accessible and fair, and committed to listening to and responding to staff concerns, they create a workplace climate that supports staff morale and encourages innovation. When leaders are assessed as inaccessible, insensitive, or unfamiliar with the daily experiences of teaching staff, confidence in their authority and in the organization is undermined.

Supervisor *refers to the person who directly supervises teaching (e.g., a head or lead teacher, educational coordinator, site supervisor, director, or principal). This person may or may not teach in the classroom on a regular basis.*

Leader *refers to the person at a site who is responsible for overall daily operations in the workplace, which may be the same as the supervisor (e.g., a director, principal, or site supervisor).*

What Teaching Staff Said

About Supervisors | Score: 4.95/6

The vast majority of staff members agreed that their supervisors are knowledgeable about early childhood education and supportive of teaching staff taking initiative.

- **85 percent** of teaching staff reported that their supervisors are knowledgeable about early childhood education and teaching young children, and **80 percent** agreed that their supervisors engage actively in professional learning.
- **80 percent** of teaching staff agreed that their supervisors encourage them to take initiative to solve problems, though **20 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.

> **"The leadership sets the tone for the school and that affects the morale of the staff."**
>
> – Teacher working in a non-Quality Counts-participating center in a middle-to-high-income census zone

Teaching staff assessments of supervisors' professional guidance and on-the-job support were less favorable.

- **65 percent** of teaching staff agreed that at least once a year, their supervisors meet with them to develop a personalized professional development plan or to review their job description to ensure it describes what they actually do.
- Less than two-thirds of teaching staff agreed that once a month, their supervisors meet with them to discuss their teaching (**62 percent**) and to offer useful suggestions that help them improve their practice (**62 percent**).
- One-quarter of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their supervisors are concerned about their personal welfare (**25 percent)** or understand challenges they face in the classroom (**24 percent**).
- **20 percent** of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their supervisors know their teaching well.

About Leaders | Score: 4.92/6

Teaching staff mostly agreed that their site leaders know their site well and encourage staff to develop their skills, take initiative, and learn from each other.

- The vast majority of staff members reported that their site leaders know their center, school, and site well and agree that their leaders encourage them to take initiative to solve problems (**89 percent**).
- Though **73 percent** of teaching staff reported that their site leaders encourage all teaching staff to develop their skills and to learn from each other, **27 percent** disagreed or only somewhat agreed.

Teaching staff assessments of site leaders' role in professional guidance and on-the-job supports were less favorable.

- **76 percent** of teaching staff agreed that their site leaders are easy to talk to, and **74 percent** agreed that their site leaders are respectful of the role and expertise of teaching staff. Nearly one-quarter of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed with these statements.
- While **63 percent** of teaching staff agreed that their leaders assist in the fair and timely resolution of staff conflicts, one-third (**37 percent**) reported this support as undependable.

Fewer staff members felt that their site leaders were familiar with how staff teach or understand the challenges they face in their classrooms.

- More than one-quarter of teaching staff disagreed or only somewhat agreed that their site leaders are familiar with how all staff members teach (**29 percent**) or understand the challenges teaching staff face in their classrooms (**28 percent**).

Leaders by Role[xxix]

In addition to understanding teacher perspectives on leadership, further analyses into the role of the site leaders were also carried out. Center-based early childhood programs employ a variety of staff leadership structures. In some centers, the leader works in the classroom and may even be considered a member of the teaching staff, while in others the leader does not typically participate in classrooms. To further probe the meaning of teaching staff assessments of supervisors and leaders, we examined how SEQUAL score varied by structure and function. We examined teaching staff assessments based on whether their supervisor or leader was another teacher or an administrator and whether or not they worked in the classroom.

- In the sample, **84 percent** of teaching staff reported that their supervisor or leader was another teacher. Leaders who were also teachers were rated more highly by teaching staff than other leaders.

- **48 percent** of teaching staff reported that the program leader, regardless of their specific role/job title, worked in the classroom for some period of time. Leaders who spent time in the classroom were rated more positively than those who did not.

Linking Teaching Staff Assessments to Quality Practice

- Teaching staff need strong educational leaders to whom they have easy access and from whom they can receive individualized feedback on job performance and reflective supervision. It is important for leaders and supervisors to gather information on staff through observation, feedback from other staff, and direct input from the staff members themselves.

- When teaching staff perceive that their leader or supervisor is not familiar with their classroom or teaching practice, it can limit the influence that those fulfilling leadership roles have on staff performance and undermine staff confidence in the program and its leadership. Spending time in classrooms is a necessary job responsibility of leaders and/or supervisors. Only through regular contact and observation can supervisors and site leaders truly understand what staff need to support children's learning.

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Given the complexity of the current early care and education system, there are a variety of avenues by which Florida counties, including Miami-Dade, could articulate standards, enforce them, and ensure sufficient funding for providers to implement them. Miami-Dade County has made significant investments in and taken critical steps toward improving the quality of ECE services. Notwithstanding the investment of resources and supports, teaching staff work conditions as captured in this study suggest further efforts are needed to support teacher practice and well-being necessary for quality services. Miami-Dade has an opportunity to encourage quality programs through its QIS[xxx] by including workplace and compensation policies among their quality criteria, with a particular focus on teaching supports, adult well-being, and appropriate learning opportunities.[xxxi]

Leaders in Miami-Dade likewise have an opportunity to shape expectations and codify standards for early educator work environments. Below is a brief summary of major themes identified in this SEQUAL study that frame key policy areas requiring further attention. Recommendations follow for funders and policymakers seeking to advance Miami-Dade County efforts to improve its quality rating system and address work environment conditions.

Adult Well-Being

Teaching staff across centers experience conditions that challenge their well-being. Many struggle to afford housing, health care, sufficient food, and other basic monthly expenses. Teaching staff also reported conditions that threaten their health and safety, most notably not being able to take breaks during the workday (although required by law to do so) or not being able to take their paid sick leave. Lastly, many teachers reported experiencing stressful workplace dynamics like intimidation or a lack of opportunities for input within their program.

Staffing and Teaching Supports

Many teachers assessed staffing levels as insufficient to provide children with individual attention or to observe them carefully. Furthermore, staff instability challenged many teachers' efforts to improve their practice. A substantial proportion of teaching staff reported not having dedicated time to perform professional duties. They instead use their own unpaid time or time while supervising children on the playground or during naps for planning and professional sharing with other teachers.

Professional Learning and Guidance

Although many staff members participate in professional development, they reported insufficient supports to engage in ongoing learning. Staff members reported difficulties in accessing or paying for professional development activities or receiving remuneration for advancing their skills or education. Identified barriers were not being able to adjust their work schedule, not being compensated for work outside of regular work hours, or not being able to depend on their employer to pay professional development expenses.

Recommendations

Miami-Dade has made significant investments in and taken critical steps toward improving the quality of early care and education services. Notwithstanding the investment of resources and supports, the work conditions of teaching staff as captured in this study suggest further efforts are needed to support teacher practice and well-being necessary for quality services.

Leaders in Miami-Dade have an opportunity to shape expectations and codify standards for early educator work environments. The following recommendations support funders and policymakers in advancing county efforts to enhance its quality improvement system and address work environment conditions.

1. Develop workplace standards, such as guidance on appropriate levels of paid planning time, which are necessary for educators to engage in professional practice and to alleviate conditions that cause educator stress. Use existing models, such as the **International Labor Organization Policy Guidelines** and the **Model Work Standards**, to support this process. Developing these standards will benefit programs throughout Miami-Dade by:

- Identifying conditions and supports that teaching staff need to effectively fulfill the professional responsibilities necessary for effective teaching;
- Acknowledging how systemic challenges to all programs impact daily teaching practice; and
- Elevating appropriate work environments as a critical component necessary to achieving desired child outcomes.

2. Provide financial resources and other assistance specifically designed to enable programs and providers to comply with work environment standards in a reasonable period of time. To accomplish this goal, resources should be:

- Long-term and sustainable over time;
- Sufficient to cover the costs associated with meeting the established work environment standards; and
- Evaluated to determine their long-term impact and effect.

3. Embed work environment standards in the Miami-Dade quality improvement system to emphasize their importance and ensure that programs cannot reach the highest quality level without addressing work environment standards. Acknowledging the inherent challenges in adjusting the existing QIS, Miami-Dade County could initiate this process by documenting

work environment conditions during the quality assessment process without incorporating them into scores. This effort would allow Miami-Dade to collect valuable site-level data on work environments that can support ongoing efforts to integrate work environment standards into the quality improvement system and Miami-Dade's professional development system as a whole.

4. Develop and implement training programs that support programs leaders, supervisors, and coaches to address work environment issues. Program leaders, supervisors, and coaches all require support and training on how to implement and sustain these types of changes. The following steps may assist in this process:

- Utilize this SEQUAL study, other SEQUAL materials, and additional resources such as the **International Labor Organization Policy Guidelines** and the **Model Work Standards** to develop an initial list of potential training areas; and
- Conduct a needs assessment with program leaders, supervisors, and coaches to further develop and prioritize training topics and content areas.

5. Provide funding to institutions of higher education and training programs to develop and offer classes and workshops related to work environment standards, rights of teaching staff on the job, and the critical importance of economic, emotional, and physical well-being among adults in the workplace. Strategies to begin this process include:

- Conducting a needs assessment with representatives from institutions of higher education and training organizations to identify existing college courses and training programs that could be expanded to include work environment standards;
- Determining which topics around work environment standards would require new college-level courses or training programs; and
- Establishing a funding process that would provide resources and incentives to institutions of higher education and training organizations to incorporate work environment standards into new or existing courses or training.

6. Institute strategies that engage early educators in the process of informing quality improvement and regularly collect data to assess how they experience the work environment. Strategies to begin this process include:

- Adjusting planning and meeting times to make them more accessible to early educators;
- Creating opportunities for teaching staff to submit audio or video testimonials that can capture their perceptions on work environment conditions and can also be used to bring teachers' voices and opinions into the planning process; and
- Incorporating opportunities for input on work environments into existing regional meetings, conferences, etc.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Study Design

Population and Sample

At the time of data collection, the population of Miami-Dade center-based early care and education programs included 1,219 active licensed centers: 354 centers participating in the county's QIS, Quality Counts; and 865 centers not participating in the QIS system. This program population excluded family child care providers listed in the Miami-Dade County Web-based Early Learning System (WELS) database. Of center-based programs not participating in the QIS, 604 participated in at least one other support initiative: 572 participated in School Readiness; 478 took part in Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK); and 53 were Head Start/Early Head Start sites, with some centers participating in more than one. Across the licensed child care center population in Miami Dade, 79 percent of listed centers reported participation in at least one support initiative. Among the SEQUAL sample, nearly all surveyed centers participated in at least one support initiative, regardless of whether or not they participated in the QIS. Among the surveyed centers participating in Quality Counts, 95 percent also participated in at least one support initiative. Among surveyed centers not participating in Quality Counts, 88 percent participated in at least one support initiative. Only one of the surveyed centers participating in Quality Counts and only three non-QIS-participating centers did not take part in any other support initiative. For more information on center participation in available support initiatives, see **Appendix Table C.3**.

As centers had the opportunity to participate in more than one support initiative, centers outside of the Quality Counts QIS were categorized by their participation in zero, one, or two or more support initiatives. Since the research team did not have contact information for all staff at selected centers, an open link was shared with directors to forward to their staff. Therefore, the total number of teaching staff invited to participate is unknown. More information on the population and sample can be found in **Appendix C: Tables and Figures**.

Sampling Frame and Selection

In line with our research questions, we pursued a sampling strategy that would allow comparison of work environment assessments from teaching staff employed at licensed child care centers based on participation in the county QIS and on center location across census income tracts. The sampling strategy focused on a stratified approach of selecting centers in each group (QIS-participating centers, non-QIS-participating centers, centers located in low-income census tracts, and centers located in middle-to-high-income census tracts). For non-QIS-participating centers, we created a sample subset to take into account those participating in zero, one, or two or more of the support initiatives available, balancing by census income tract. Only centers that had two or more classrooms and two or more teachers on staff were included in the study.

Although our aim was to include 130 centers in the sample, limitations in quality of administrative data resulted in a need for substantial center replacement. Teaching staff for whom contact information was unavailable had to be contacted by means of an anonymous open link from their director, and as a result, open-link teacher responses were limited.

Due to sample size, we were unable to examine variables beyond QIS participation and census income tract within the scope of the study. However, there was interest from the community in a comparison of centers by participation in support initiatives, including School Readiness, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), and Head Start/Early Head Start. For more information on center participation in these initiatives, see **Appendix Table C.3**.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, the survey instrument and data collection procedures were approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of California, Berkeley.

In spring 2018, a notification letter was sent via email to all licensed child care centers in the Web-based Early Learning System (WELS) throughout Miami-Dade County. The letter introduced the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) and announced the upcoming study, indicating that their center could be selected to participate. Within a week of the notification letter, staff at CSCCE sent an email to directors selected for participation via UC Berkeley Qualtrics. This email indicated that their center was selected to participate, described the purpose of the survey, and provided the personalized link to access their survey. A separate email with personalized links for all members of the teaching staff was also sent when such contact information was available. To accommodate data limitations, directors were also sent an open link to share with their teaching staff. The data collection period began in spring 2018 and extended into the summer, with replacement sampling conducted as needed.

Before accessing the SEQUAL survey, the link first brought the participant to the Informed Consent page, which detailed the purpose of the study, the procedures, any potential risks/discomforts, confidentiality of the data provided, contact information for our staff, a statement explaining that participation was completely voluntary, and finally, an online consent form where participants could agree or decline to participate. If the participant selected "agree," they were taken to the SEQUAL survey, and if they selected "disagree," they were redirected to the CSCCE homepage and removed from our SEQUAL mailing list.

Due to difficulties in attaining updated administrative data and limitations of participants in accessing a reliable computer, a second method of physical survey distribution was offered to center participants who had been selected to participate. Thus, the survey could be accessed

from any electronic device connected to the Internet or taken in the form of a written survey hand-delivered to centers in Miami-Dade. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. Due to concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality of information, participants who received an open link had to take the survey in one session. Recipients of direct survey links could take the survey in multiple intervals. To facilitate data collection, a research assistant at CSCCE called each center director, confirmed that both they and their teaching staff had received links to the study, and offered to answer questions about the study. In addition to the outreach efforts of the research assistant, a total of six reminder emails were sent to participants who had not completed the survey. Field research staff were available to pick up completed physical surveys. In addition, participants had the opportunity to mail their completed surveys personally via prepaid postage provided by CSCCE.

To thank participants for their time and effort, a gift card was sent to each participant who completed the survey.

Miami-Dade County's New Quality Improvement System

As of May 1, 2018, Quality Counts announced that it will be phasing out its existing quality improvement initiative and introducing in its place the Thrive by 5 Early Learning Quality Improvement System. Under this QIS, programs at each level of proficiency will receive targeted support strategies, along with technical assistance, coaching, and other professional development supports, such as educational scholarships to help providers realize their quality improvement goals. For more information on the system and its quality improvement framework, see https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/early-learning-quality-improvement-system.

Survey Instruments

Two survey instruments — the SEQUAL Teaching Staff Survey and the SEQUAL Administrative Survey — were employed to capture information on work environments. These assessments of observed quality were used by the CSCCE team to support the analysis of the SEQUAL findings. Each survey was offered in English and Spanish. The online surveys were administered by UC Berkeley licensed-Qualtrics and took approximately 40 minutes to complete. As described in the previous section on Data Collection Procedures, physical surveys were made available to participants who lacked reliable email contact information.

SEQUAL Teaching Staff Survey. The SEQUAL Teaching Staff Survey includes two sections: 1) staff perceptions about workplace policies that affect their teaching practice; and 2) a profile of teacher education, experiences, and demographic information. For the section on staff perceptions of their work environment, teaching staff were asked to rate a series of statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The items focused on each of following five domains:

1. Teaching Supports – 33 items, including statements on the following dimensions: curriculum; observations and assessments; materials; support services for children and families; and staffing and professional responsibilities;
2. Learning Community – 12 items, including statements on professional development opportunities and applying learning;
3. Job Crafting – 21 items, including statements on the following dimensions: making decisions in the workplace; teamwork; and input;
4. Adult Well-Being – 38 items, including statements on the following dimensions: economic well-being; quality of work life; and wellness supports; and
5. Leadership – 28 items, including perceptions of their supervisor and the leader of their program.

In the teaching staff profile, participants were asked to provide information on personal characteristics (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity), level of education, and work characteristics (e.g., wages, tenure, age range of children in their classroom).

SEQUAL Program Leader Survey. Program leaders also filled out a version of the survey. A program leader was identified as the person at the site who would have access to information about workplace benefits and policies, as well as program and staff characteristics. The program leader survey asked program leaders to provide a variety of information, including a center and administrator profile.

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Short Depression Scale (CES-D 10). The short version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Short Depression Scale (CES-D 10), a widely used self-report measure for adolescents and adults designed to assess attitudes consistent with a diagnosis of depression, was completed by administrators and teaching staff. The scale features 10 items that assess depressive symptoms as outlined by the Diagnostic Statistical

Manual (DSM). The items ask about mood, feelings, and physical health (e.g., appetite and sleep).[xxxii]

Analysis Plan

Frequency Analyses. All SEQUAL items were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). We used frequency analysis for SEQUAL items (i.e., the percent of teaching staff who agreed or disagreed), as a measure of teaching staff assessment of workplace policies, practices, and relationships. These frequencies are reported as percentages or fractions for each of the items on the SEQUAL domains and dimensions. Crosstabs were also performed to look at the percentage of teaching staff responses to the SEQUAL by region, center rating, and position.

T-Tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs). T-tests and ANOVAs were used to examine differences between groups (e.g., by participation in QIS, census income tract). Depending on the number of groups, T-tests and ANOVAs were conducted to examine differences in teaching staff perceptions of their work environment as captured by their SEQUAL scores.

Correlations and Associations Between Scores. To examine the relationships between study variables and scores, bivariate correlations, chi-square, and regression models (linear and multiple regression) were conducted. Correlations were conducted for numerical variables and chi-square for categorical variables.

Throughout this report, we denote differences in SEQUAL scores and other variables by pointing out where scores between two or more groups are *significantly different* from one another. This indicates that there is a statistical difference between group scores or a statistical relationship between variables at a rate greater than chance levels. All significant findings are reported at a p value of $<.05$.

Appendix B: Description of Program Leaders

Personal Characteristics

Race and Ethnicity

Sixty-four percent of program leaders identified as being of Hispanic or Latino descent. The breakdown of the sample by race/ethnicity was 81-percent white (including participants who identified as Hispanic/Latino), 12-percent black/African American, 5-percent other, and 2-percent Asian.

Professional Characteristics

Education and Credentials

Nearly three-quarters of program leaders (72 percent) held a bachelor's degree or higher. Of those with a degree, 42 percent majored in Early Childhood Education, 14 percent in Elementary Education, 11 percent in Child Development or Psychology, and a remaining 25 percent reported other majors, including Education Leadership and Speech-Language Pathology.

Experience and Tenure

Overall, program leaders had a wealth of experience in the field, with nearly two-thirds (65 percent) working in the early care and education field for more than 15 years. There was variation in experience among program leaders in their current position at their center. While 83 percent of program leaders in the sample worked in their current role at their current place of employment for at least three years, a sizable portion (37 percent) had more than 10 years of experience in their current role at their current place of employment. A remaining 16 percent of program leaders had two years or less in their current position.

Compensation

Wages

The median hourly wage for center directors was $24.00. The median hourly wage for program leaders was $20.00.

Benefits

Health Care

Most program leaders in the sample (77 percent) had health insurance, with 46 percent receiving health care from their employer. Of the program leaders who have health insurance from another source, most purchased their own health insurance policy through the Affordable Care Act/Health Care Marketplace, Medicaid or Medicare, or directly from the insurance company itself.

Appendix C: Tables and Figures

Population and Sample

Table C.1. Center Population and Sample

Group	Overall in Miami-Dade	Sample
QIS-Participating Centers	**354**	**40**
• Located in low-income census tracts	259	20
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	95	20
Non-QIS-Participating Centers	**865**	**90**
• Located in low-income census tracts	491	45
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	374	45
Non-QIS-Participating Centers: Participation in Other Support Initiatives		
• Participating in 0 surveyed initiatives	295	30
• Participating in 1 surveyed initiative	226	30
• Participating in 2+ surveyed initiatives	267	30
Total	**1,219** active, licensed center-based programs	**130** centers

Additional surveyed initiatives included Head Start/Early Head Start, Voluntary Pre-K, and School Readiness site supports.

Response Rates

Table C.2. Response Rate of Teaching Staff and Program Leaders, by Center

	Percent	Number of Centers
Centers with participation of both program leader and teaching staff	29%	45
Centers with participation from teaching staff only	26%	40
Centers with participation from program leader only	9%	14
Centers with no participation from program leader or teaching staff	24%	31
Center participation	76%	99

Table C.3. Center Participation in Other Support Initiatives, by QIS Participation

QIS-Participating Centers			n= 20
QIS only	Head Start	School Readiness	Voluntary Pre-K
1	2	18	19
Non-QIS-Participating Centers			n = 25
No support initiative	Head Start	School Readiness	Voluntary Pre-K
3	1	9	12

Table C.4. Number of Program Leaders Sent Surveys and Response Rate, by Group

Group	Sample	Program Leader Completed Survey	Percent by Group (n=45)
QIS-Participating Centers	**40**	19	48%
• Located in low-income census tracts	20	9	45%
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	20	10	50%
Non-QIS-Participating Centers	**90**	26	29%
• Located in low-income census tracts	45	15	33%
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	45	11	24%
Non-QIS-Participating Centers: Participation in Other Support Initiatives	**90**	26	29%
• Participating in 0 surveyed initiatives	30	10	33%
• Participating in 1 surveyed initiative	30	7	23%
• Participating in 2+ surveyed initiatives	30	9	30%
Total	130	45	35%

Table C.5 Number of Teaching Staff Responses, by Group

Group	Teaching Staff Completed Survey	Percent of Final Sample (n=280)
QIS-Participating Centers	**140**	50%
• Located in low-income census tracts	80	29%
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	60	21%
Non-QIS-Participating Centers	**135**	48%
• Located in low-income census tracts	58	21%
• Located in middle-to-high-income census tracts	77	27%
Non-QIS-Participating Centers: Participation in Other Support Initiatives	135:	48%
• Participating in 0 surveyed initiatives	30	11%
• Participating in 1 surveyed initiative	32	11%
• Participating in 2+ surveyed initiatives	73	26%
General: Unable to pair with center[xxxiii]	**5**	2%
Total	280	[xxxiv]

Endnotes

1. Introduction

[i] Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., Connors, M., & Darrah, R. (2011). *Staff preparation, reward, and support: Are quality rating and improvement systems addressing all of the key ingredients necessary for change?* Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/CSCCEQRISPolicyBrief_2011.pdf.

[ii] Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/.

[iii] Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care (2015, April). *QRIS Resource Guide: Section 4 Standards and Criteria*. Retrieved from https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.govfiles/chapters/QRISRG_Chapter_4_Standards.pdf; Zellman, G.L., & Perlman, M. (2008). *Child-Care Quality Rating and Improvement Systems in Five Pioneer States: Implementation Issues and Lessons Learned*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

[iv] See BUILD Initiative & Teachstone (2016). What are the most common areas of quality assessed by QRIS? QRIS Compendium: Top Ten Questions about QRIS. Retrieved from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-4/; BUILD Initiative & Teachstone (2016). What are the features of professional development? QRIS Compendium: Top Ten Questions about QRIS. Retrieved from http://qriscompendium.org/top-ten/question-10/.

[v] Helburn, S.W. (Ed.) (1995). *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers. Technical Report.* Denver, CO: University of Colorado at Denver, Department of Economics, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy; Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1990*). Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America: Final Report of the National Child Care Staffing Study*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce; Whitebook, M., & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18(3), 271–395; Whitebook, M., & Sakai, L. (2004). *By a Thread: How Child Care Centers Hold on to Teachers, How Teachers Build Lasting Careers*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.17848/9781417524457; Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Gerber, E., & Howes, C. (2001). *Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce; Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., & Howes, C. (1997). *NAEYC Accreditation as a Strategy for Improving Child Care Quality: An Assessment*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

[vi] Barnett, W.S., & Hustedt, J.T. (2011). Improving Public Financing for Early Learning Programs. *National Institute for Early Education Research*. Issue 23; Mitchell, A., Stoney, L., & Dichter, H. (2001). *Financing child care in the United States: An expanded catalog of current strategies*. Kansas City, MO: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; Merzer, M. (nd). *The billion dollar bet on a community's future*. Miami, FL: The Children's Trust; Gilchrest, N. (2017). *Funding for Early Childhood Education in the State of Florida*. Bob Graham Center, University of Florida. Retrieved from: http://www.bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu/sites/default/files/Policy%20Paper%20Narrelle%20Gilchrist_ECE2017.pdf.

[vii] Across the county, 79 percent of licensed center-based programs in Miami-Dade participated in at least one support initiative. Reflecting the population, a high proportion of surveyed QIS-participating centers and non-QIS participating centers took part in at least one support initiative: 95 percent of surveyed QIS-participating centers took part in at least one support initiative, most commonly Voluntary Pre-K, and 88 percent of surveyed non-QIS-participating programs took part in at least one outside initiative, most commonly Voluntary Pre-K.

[viii] Support initiatives within the scope of this study included: Head Start, Voluntary Pre-K, and School Readiness onsite support programming.

[ix] For the purposes of this study, centers were categorized by their location within a federally designated low- or middle-to-high-income census tract. Census tracts, defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions designated for the purpose of capturing responses for the decennial census, as part of the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program. Source: United States Census Bureau. (2011). *Geographic Terms and Concepts – Census Tract*. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_ct.html.

2. Teacher and Program Leader Characteristics

[x] For purposes of reporting and analysis, the category of teachers includes those who identified as teachers and head/lead teachers, based on the similarity of job duties and roles.

[xi] The Children's Trust, the Children's Forum, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. (2017). *Miami-Dade Quality Counts Workforce Study*. Early Learning Career Center. Doral, FL. Retrieved from: http://www.qccareers.org/download/miami-dade-county-quality-counts-workforce-study-2017/.

[xii] U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). *American Community Survey - One-Year Estimate.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/county/Miami-Dade County, Florida/ALL; United States Census Bureau. (2018). QuickFacts, Miami-Dade County, Florida data. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/miamidadecountyflorida/POP060210.

[xiii] The Children's Trust, et al., (2017).

[xiv] Copeman Petig, A., Sakai, L., Austin, L.J.E., Edwards, B., & Montoya, E. (2017). *Florida Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. Retrieved from: http://cscce.berkeley.edu/florida-early-childhood-higher-education-inventory/.

[xv] Copeman Petig, A., Austin, L.J.E., & Dean, A. (2018) *Understanding Many Languages - Preparing Early Educators to Teach Dual Language Learners*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. Retrieved from: http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2018/10/Understanding-Many-Languages.pdf.

[xvi] Migration Policy Institute. (2015). Florida: Quick Stats on Young Children and Workers Providing Early Childhood Education and Care. Retrieved from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ECEC-Workforce-Florida-FactSheet.pdf.

[xvii] Between 2009 and 2013, 26 percent of the U.S. workforce as a whole were part of families enrolled in at least one of four public support programs: the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Source: Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018, State Profiles: Florida*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2018/06/2018-Index-Florida.pdf.

3. Findings

[xviii] Due to limitations of sample size by race/ethnicity groups, analyses were run comparing the domain and dimension scores of teaching staff who identified as Hispanic/Latino to teaching staff who did not identify as Hispanic/Latino, yielding Ns of 192 and 58, respectively.

[xix] ($t(72)=-2.17$, $p=.03$).

[xx] ($t(72)=-2.31$, $p=.02$).

[xxi] ($t(71)=-2.28$, $p=.03$).

[xxii] ($F(2,78)=6.75$, $p=.00$).

[xxiii] ($t(72)=-2.28$, $p=.02$).

[xxiv] ($t(235)=-2.28$, $p=.02$).

[xxv] ($t(229)=-2.33$, $p=.02$).

[xxvi] ($t(70)=-1.96$, $p=.05$).

[xxvii] ($F(2,155)= 3.07$, $p=.05$).

[xxviii] ($F(2,257)=3.215$, $p=.04$).

[xxix] No comparisons within the Program Leadership domain were examined by site or teacher characteristics.

4. Final Thoughts and Recommendations

[xxx] "A QRIS is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs." QRIS administrators "award quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards." See the QRIS Resource Guide for more information. Miami-Dade County refers to their early care and education assessment system as the quality improvement system (QIS).

[xxxi] Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., Connors, M., & Darrah, R. (2011). *Staff preparation, reward, and support: Are quality ratings and improvement systems addressing all the key ingredients necessary for change? Executive Summary.* Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley.

5. Appendices

[xxxii] Andresen, E.M., Malmgren, J.A., Carter, W.B., & Patrick, D.L. (1994). Screening for depression in well older adults: Evaluation of a short form of the CES-D. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 10, 77–84.

[xxxiii] In such cases, paper and pencil surveys were returned without sufficient information to match the respondent with their workplace ID and, therefore, were separately categorized as general respondents.

[xxxiv] Due to the limitations of up-to-date administrative data for teaching staff, open links were sent to center program leaders to be forwarded to teaching staff. As a result, we are unable to estimate the total number of teaching staff who did or did not receive access to these open links.