



STATE OF THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

FEBRUARY 2026

NEARLY ALL OF THE ECE WORKFORCE* IS FEMALE, AND OVER ¾ ARE FULL-TIME

64,631
EMPLOYEES

97%
FEMALE

78%
FULL-TIME

HALF OF THE ECE WORKFORCE IS AFRICAN AMERICAN

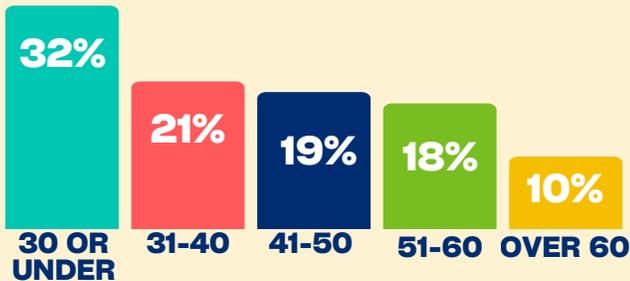
34%
WHITE

50%
AFRICAN AMERICAN

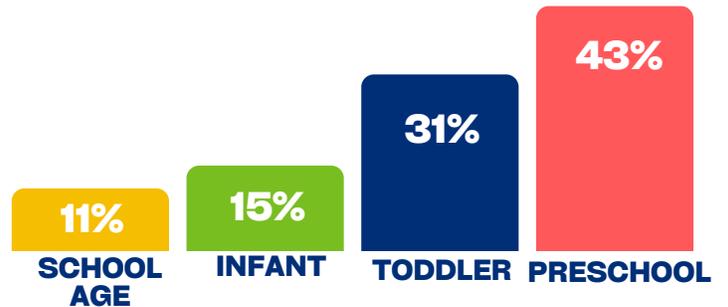
8%
HISPANIC

8%
OTHER

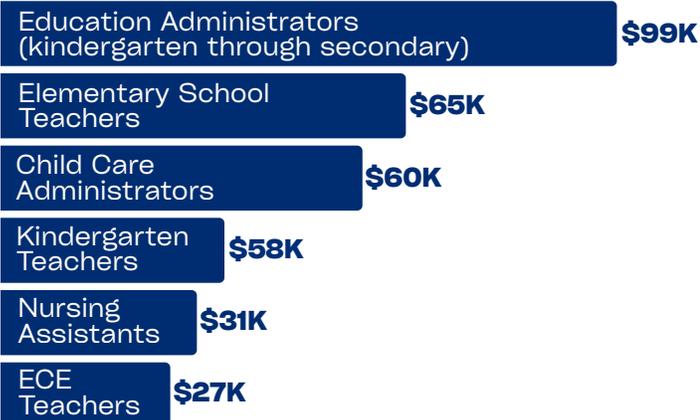
NEARLY A THIRD OF THE ECE WORKFORCE IS AGED 30 OR UNDER



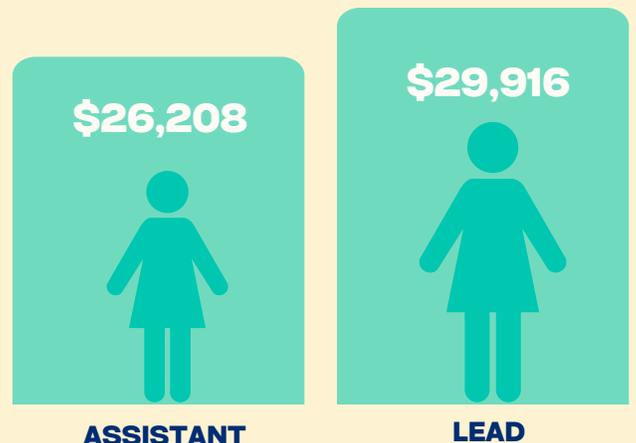
2 OUT OF 5 (OR 43%) ECE EDUCATORS* WORK IN PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS



AT \$27K ANNUALLY, ECE TEACHERS^ MAKE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN THOSE IN SIMILAR FIELDS



BOTH ASSISTANT AND LEAD TEACHERS IN CHILD CARE MAKE LESS THAN \$30K



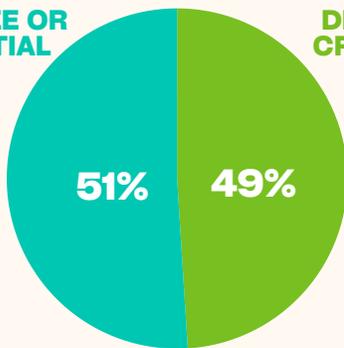
***WORKFORCE** = TEACHERS, EDUCATORS, AND STAFF WHO SUPPORT ECE PROGRAMS

+**EDUCATORS** = TEACHERS, FLOATERS, DIRECTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, CURRICULUM COORDINATORS, AND OWNERS

^**TEACHERS** = LEAD TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT TEACHERS

AROUND HALF OF THE ECE WORKFORCE HAS NO DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL

NO DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL

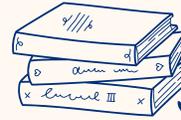


DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL

OF THE 49% OF THE ECE WORKFORCE WITH A DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL, NEARLY TWO-THIRDS ARE ECE-SPECIFIC



63% ECE-SPECIFIC



37% NOT ECE-SPECIFIC

*ECE-specific degrees or credentials include CDAs, technical college certificates and diplomas, associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in early childhood education.

WORKFORCE WINS

INVESTMENT OF \$45M ANNUALLY IN GEORGIA'S PRE-K WORKFORCE



- **Georgia's Pre-K** lead teachers transitioned to the K-12 salary scale in State Fiscal Year 2025, resulting in a 16% salary increase, helping pave the way for salary parity.
- The salary for Pre-K assistant teachers was also increased by \$5,551 in both public and private settings. Consequently, the retention rate for assistant teachers rose by 12 percentage points.

INVESTMENT OF \$33.6M IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH FOR THE ECE WORKFORCE

- **DECAL Scholars** awarded scholarships to more than 2,000 ECE educators to pursue degrees or credentials and provided career counseling to over 350 individuals.
- Over 8,000 high-quality trainings were approved, and nearly 70 new **Online Learning Library Initiative** courses were developed.
- The **Thriving Child Care Business Academy** provided free business and financial management training and resources to ECE program owners and administrators to strengthen their business practices, with over 1,700 registrations across small study groups and webinars.
- The **Infant Toddler Specialist Network** facilitated 95 trainings on developmentally appropriate teaching practices and materials to foster young children's language and literacy skills, reaching 1,229 professionals.
- The **Supporting Early Education and Development for Success (SEEDS)** program strengthened social-emotional and instructional practices by coaching over 1,700 educators, training more than 4,000 practitioners in social-emotional learning, and delivering more than 300 Pyramid Model courses to over 700 ECE teachers.
- DECAL launched the **Early Language and Literacy Lab**, which currently offers 187 approved trainings to help ECE teachers deepen their understanding of the Science of Reading and apply evidence-based strategies to strengthen language and literacy instruction.

INVESTMENT OF \$9.9M IN THE WORKFORCE IN 2025 THROUGH THE QUALITY RATED WORKFORCE BONUSES



- DECAL issued annual \$500 workforce bonuses to 19,716 ECE professionals in Quality Rated child care programs in calendar year 2025.



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

SOURCES

STABLE CHILD CARE SURVEY (2020)
MARKET RATE SURVEY (2021)
POWER PROJECT SURVEY RESULTS (2021)

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GA'S ECE INDUSTRY (2021)
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GA'S ECE INDUSTRY (2022-2024)
COST OF CHILDCARE (2024)

Sources are available at www.decals.ga.gov or by emailing research@decals.ga.gov.

CONNECT WITH **THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING** ON ALL MAJOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

