

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION **WORKFORCE**

# REPORT

**REGION 2 COUNTIES:** Clearwater  
Idaho  
Latah  
Nez Perce  
Lewis

# Early Care & Education in Idaho:

## An Introduction

The state of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Idaho has been in crisis since before 2020. Pandemic support funds have helped a struggling industry remain afloat, but as economic pressures increase and COVID-relief funding ends, the ECCE businesses in our state are preparing to make drastic changes. Parents and professional care givers will feel the squeeze, and it's important to remember that 62% of children under 6 in Idaho have both parents in the labor force and 49% of people in Idaho live in a child care desert.<sup>1</sup>

This report shares an up-to-date and accurate picture of the state of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) field and its workforce in Idaho's Region 2 in 2022. The IdahoSTARS project is the leading expert on child care within the state and our RISE database serves as Idaho's registry for early childhood care and education professionals. Data included in this report, unless otherwise noted, was pulled from RISE in November of 2022. Additional data and quotes have been provided from statewide surveys of the experts themselves, our early care and education professionals and program directors/owners.

426



**Early Care &  
Education  
Professionals in  
Region 2**

94

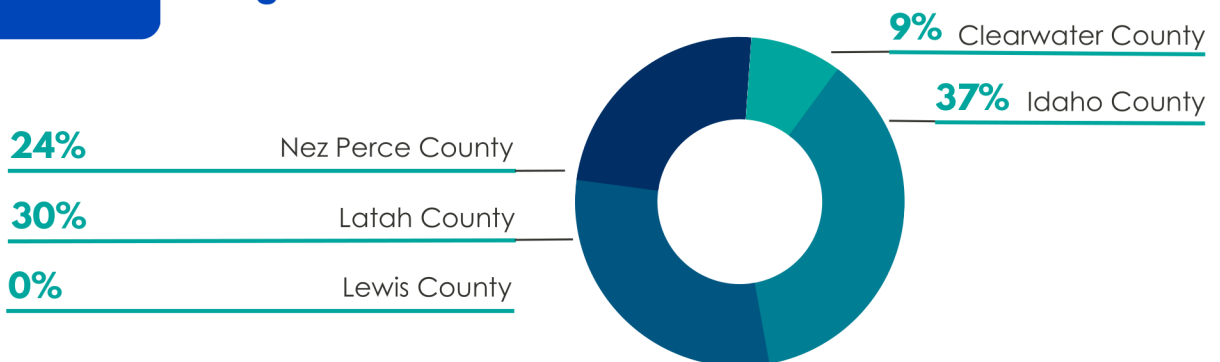


**Early Care &  
Education  
Programs in  
Region 2**

### Survey of Early Care and Education Professionals

Nearly 70 professionals in Region 2 took the Early Care and Education Professional Survey providing feedback regarding wages, staff turnover, years in the field, the struggles they face in their work, and the impending funding losses. Their voice and experience is vital to ensuring the full picture of Early Education is seen.

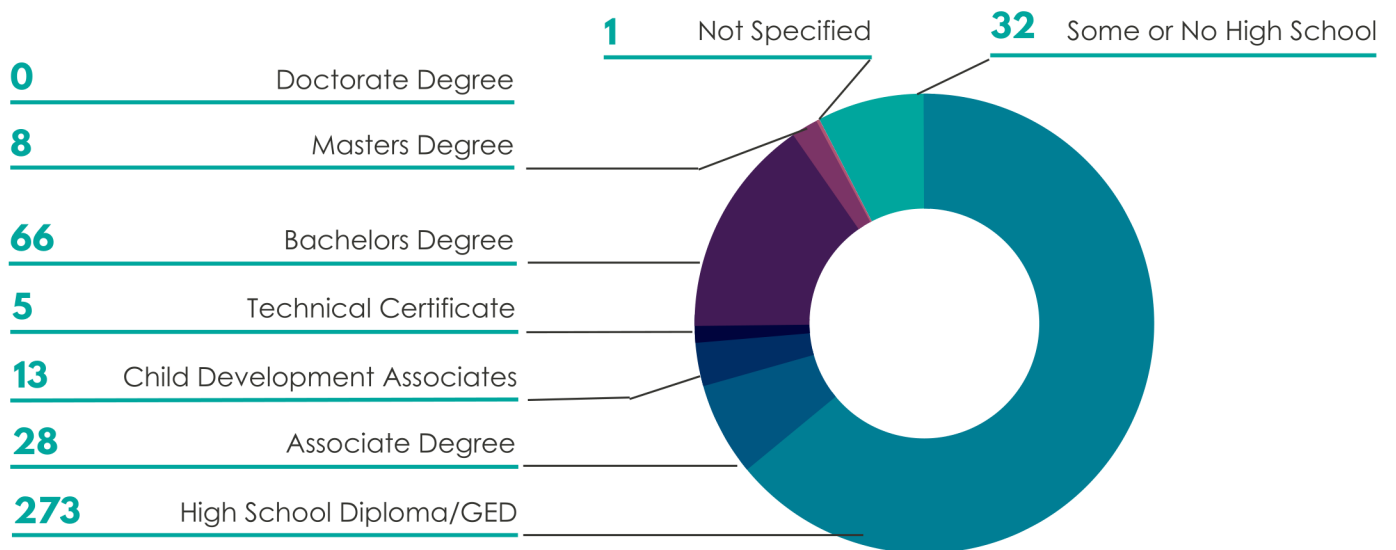
### Region 2 - Percent of Respondents by County



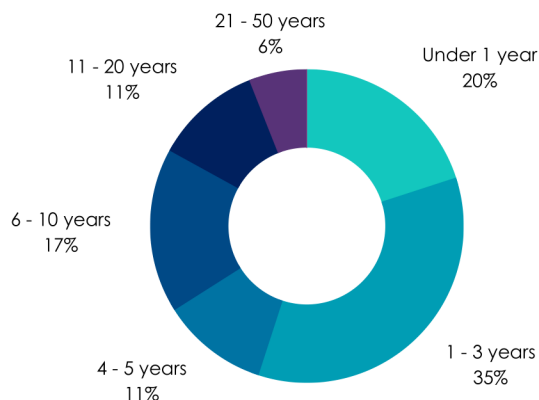
# Education and Experience

In general, our demographics data shows that the majority of Region 2's Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Professionals have very little education and not much experience. Caring for young children is tough work and requires thought and training in order to provide quality education. IdahoSTARS works hard to provide pathways to increase education, wages, and incentivize early educators to remain in the field and gain higher levels of experience, but without support and investment, our child care system in Idaho is in trouble.

## Education Level of Early Educators in Region 2



## Years served in Child Care Field by Region 2 survey respondents



**55%** of Region 2's Child Care Providers have less than 5 years of experience

## Region 2's Average Early Educator

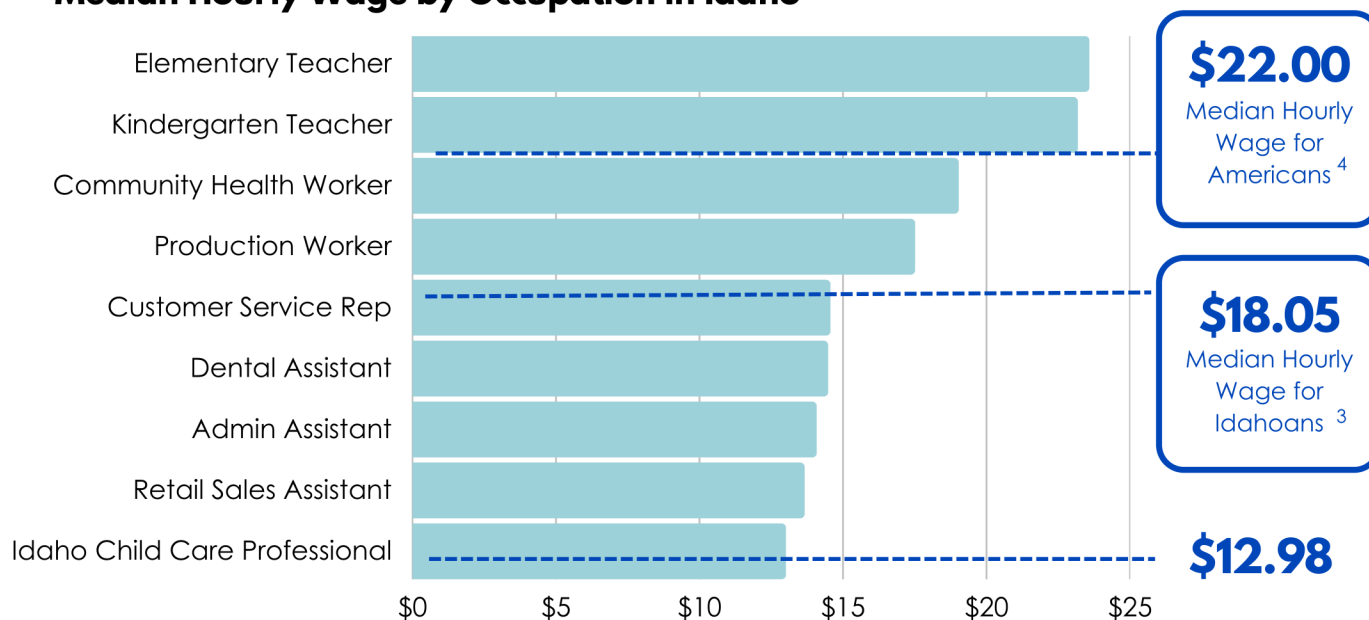
- Works in a center with 25+ children
- 31 years old
- Female
- Makes \$12/hour
- High School Diploma



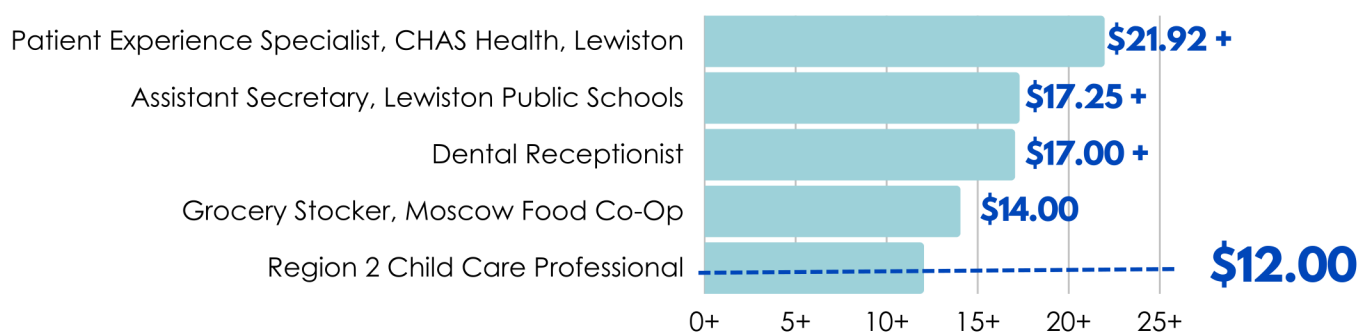
# Wages, Benefits, and Assistance

Wages for Early Care and Education Professionals in Idaho are some of the lowest in any occupation. While wages increased over the last year, the increase was subsidized through relief dollars. These funds helped retain staff who could earn higher wages in other sectors. For most programs this wage increase is unsustainable for their business without supportive outside funding. Business owners face difficult, if not impossible, choices when grants end.

## Median Hourly Wage by Occupation in Idaho <sup>3</sup>



## Wages for Comparable Entry-Level Jobs in Region 2 <sup>2</sup>



**30%** of survey respondents qualify for government assistance.

**84%** of survey respondents believe low wages are causing high staff turnover.

“I feel undervalued and under appreciated by society. I’m getting a bachelors in Child Development, but feel like I won’t be able to make a living wage even with my education and experience. - Region 2 Early Childhood Educator

# What Early Childhood Education Directors and Owners are saying ?

Thirty owners and directors of child care programs in Region 2 took part in a November 2022 survey through IdahoSTARS. Some of the programs have been open for nearly 42 years while others opened this past year. 70% of those surveyed had center based programs while 30% were homebased programs.

## What is your greatest challenge?

“The revolving door of families needing care and being frustrated that there aren't enough programs in the area to accommodate the regional need for child care.

“Providing current staff with a wage that they are worth, vacation time off, and Health insurance. It has been a great experience with the wage enhancement as I can recruit and keep staff along with the phase grant I can help families as we are still experiencing Covid.

“Parents affording child care [is the biggest struggle] because they barely make over the amount at which they could get assistance. I think the system should change so someone who is very little over the limit can still get some help.

“We're worn out. McDonalds starts at \$15/hour & people want to make higher wages than that with better benefits.



## Raising Rates

The rising costs of utilities, food, insurance, materials, and payroll put early education programs in a position where they must charge families higher rates, when parents are already struggling to pay.

**63%** of ECCE director/owner respondents in Region 2 say they expect to raise rates in 2023.

### Market rate for center-based infant care in Region 2 counties in 2021.<sup>5</sup>

Latah County:	\$1039/month
Clearwater & Nez Perce County:	\$790/month
Idaho & Lewis Counties:	\$599/month



## Staffing is a struggle:

Region 2 programs struggle to find and retain quality staff who are willing to work a demanding job for low wages and no benefits.

**67%** of programs need more staff right now.

**85%** of programs with multiple staff, experience retention issues.



## Families can't find care:

Region 2 programs do not have enough available space or staffing to serve all children and families needing care.

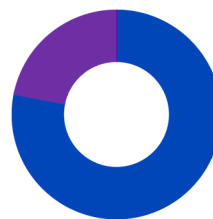
**97%** of programs have NO available space for infants.

**43%** have NO openings in any age range.



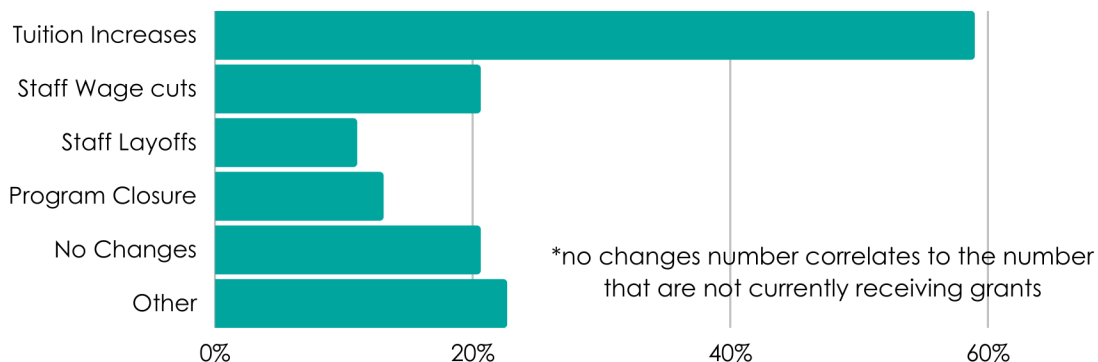
## Grant Funding Loss Looms

COVID-relief dollars received through grants will end in June of 2023, and many programs wonder how they will keep their doors open when covering expenses has been so hard. 90% of Region 2 respondents are currently receiving grants through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare that were funded with federal Covid-relief dollars .



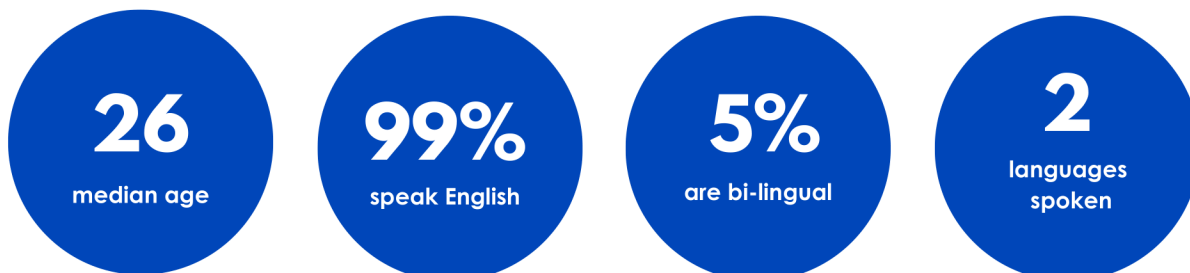
**90%**  
receiving  
grants

### What will your program do when grant funding ends?

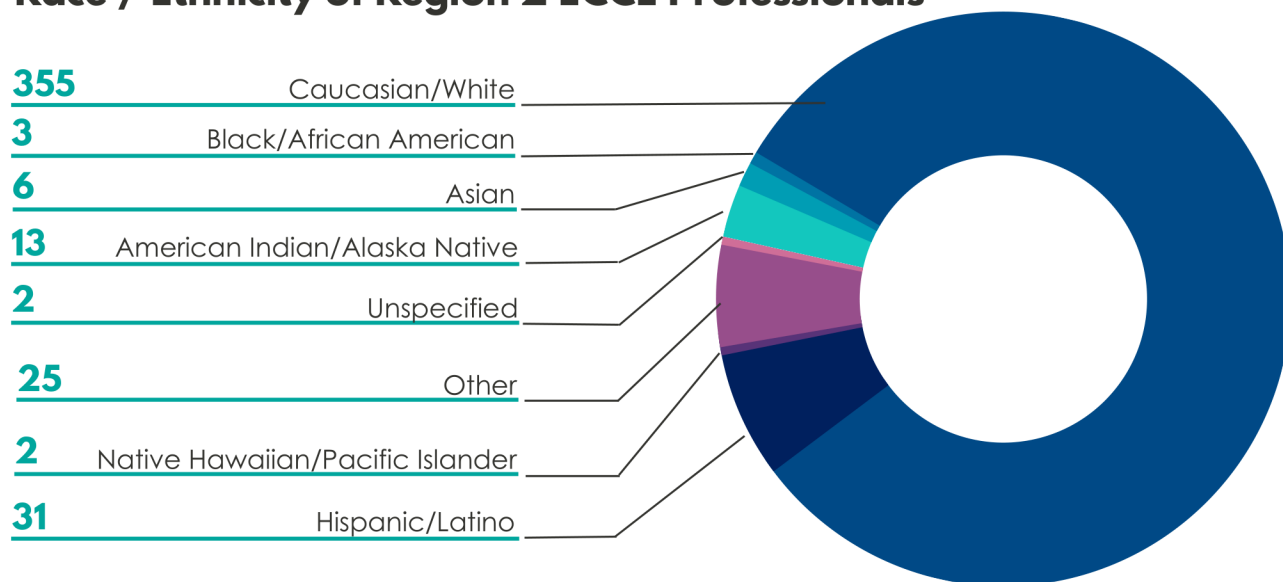


# Workforce Demographics

The data within this report represents professionals categorized in the RISE database as child care providers, currently employed in legally operating Idaho child care facilities within Region 2 as of November 2022.



## Race / Ethnicity of Region 2 ECCE Professionals



### Main Sources:

- Early Care & Education Professional Survey - <https://idahostars.org/About-Us>
- Child Care Program Director & Owner Survey - <https://idahostars.org/About-Us>
- RISE Database - <https://rise.idahostars.org/>

### Additional Sources:

- 1) Federal Reserve Idaho Child Care Snapshot - <https://www.frbsf.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/idaho-child-care-snapshot.pdf>
- 2) Wages for Comparable Entry Level Jobs - Indeed Idaho Job listing search
- 3) Idaho Dep of Labor Employment and Wage Survey - <https://lmi.idaho.gov/oes>
- 4) National Equity Atlas Indicators - [https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Wages\\_Median#/](https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Wages_Median#/)
- 5) Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: Child Care Local Market Rates - <https://publicdocuments.dhw.idaho.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=19508&dbid=0&repo=PUBLIC-DOCUMENTS>





IdahoSTARS is a joint project between the University of Idaho - Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development and the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children. We are funded by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Child Care Development Block Grant.



## Contact

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