



New Jersey's Childcare Workforce: An Examination of Internet Job Postings from October 2023

AUTHORED BY

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Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

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ABOUT THE
**RUTGERS CHILD CARE
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

With funding and support from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, the Center for Women and Work, the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, and the National Institute of Early Education Research at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey have joined together to form the Rutgers Child Care Research Collaborative for the purpose of conducting research and facilitating community conversations that develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of New Jersey's child care landscape. Our research aims to increase understanding about the needs and interests of parents in New Jersey, the supply and motivations of the child care workforce, and the capacity of the child care sector to meet demand for child care today and into to future within our diverse state.



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INTRODUCTION

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey is part of a multi-center collaborative project focused on child care in New Jersey with the Center for Women and Work and the National Institute for Early Education Research with support and collaboration from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. Through this work, the Heldrich Center is evaluating the child care workforce through a multi-modal research approach. This brief outlines the research findings from the Heldrich Center's job posting analysis, which offers insights into job advertisements in the child care field, including position type, employment type, wages, and location. These findings offer insights into the demand for workers in the child care field.

▲ Key Findings

- A majority of New Jersey job postings in the child care sector were for teacher/educator/instructor positions.
- Job title and position terminology in the child care sector varies considerably.
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of child care job postings were for positions with hourly wages and only 21% advertised annual salaries. Only 1% of job postings advertised daily wages and less than 1% advertised weekly wages.
- Advertised wages within the child care sector are low. Average advertised wages for the category of teacher/educator/instructor were \$17.68 per hour, which is very low when compared to the New Jersey mean average hourly wage of \$34.08 across all occupations.
- While child care job postings were present across the state, there were higher concentrations of job postings found in more densely populated regions consistent with population distribution.

BACKGROUND

Child care providers are facing difficulties finding and retaining qualified staff, which is not a new policy challenge. Turnover of the child care workforce has been a constant challenge since the 1990s (Totenhagen et al., 2016; Whitebook, 1999). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated child care workforce challenges, as maternal labor force participation declined at the start of the pandemic, which could be seen as both a driver and a consequence of the decline in employment in the child care field (Crouse et al., 2023). In the recovery from the pandemic, the child care field has largely struggled to meet pre-pandemic employment levels (Small & Lancaster, 2022). Research also shows that while the number of child care programs has increased since the onset of the pandemic, the number of employees per program has decreased (Crouse et al., 2023). The pandemic also put the issue firmly on the policy agenda, resulting in a renewed interest in finding and pursuing alternatives to support the industry.

The specific challenge of hiring and retaining child care workers has persisted post-pandemic, causing concerns about meeting the needs of working families and parents' ability to engage in the labor force. Research from the Center for American Progress suggests that the child care industry has not kept pace with post-pandemic recovery and job growth, as compared to other low-wage fields such as retail and hospitality, which were also heavily affected by the pandemic (Khattar & Coffey, 2023). The research suggests that the child care industry has particularly struggled due to child care jobs' relative attractiveness as "good quality jobs," with key job quality measures noted as the availability of benefits, working conditions, and advancement opportunities (Khattar & Coffey, 2023). Moreover, since wages in the child care field have not remained competitive, are not considered living wages, and have not increased in recent years, the research suggests that child care jobs have become less attractive to prospective workers, as compared to other low-wage occupations (Khattar & Coffey, 2023). National data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that child care workers in the United States had a median hourly wage of \$14.60 in May 2023. This wage was then compared to total/all occupations in the United States, with a median hourly wage of \$23.11, and other personal care and service workers, with a median hourly wage of \$16.68 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024) went on to identify that the lowest 10% of child care workers in the United States earned less than \$10.79 per hour, and the highest 10% earned more than \$20.80 per hour. From these data, it can be seen that the highest 10% of child care workers still earned less than the median hourly wage across all occupations assessed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

New Jersey has experienced the same challenges as other states with a high unmet demand for child care workers. Research from the New Jersey State Policy Lab featuring data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the share of children in New Jersey under the age of six with all available parents in the labor force has increased, suggesting a potential growing need for child care in the state (Small et al., 2023). A 2022 survey by Advocates for Children of New Jersey highlighted child care centers' challenges in finding staff to meet the demand for care across the state, with survey findings revealing

that a majority of centers (representing 20 of the 21 counties in New Jersey) reported experiencing problems hiring new staff as the main reason that they were not able to enroll more infants and toddlers in care (Dellanno & Rice, 2022). These data suggest that New Jersey’s child care workforce landscape is experiencing challenges in meeting the need for care across the state.

Understanding how child care providers advertise for staff offers insights into how these employers see their labor force needs, presently and into the near future. Job postings can serve as indicators of labor market demands by highlighting the types of positions and qualifications that employers are actively seeking. As such, an analysis of job postings has the potential to reveal insights into what providers are specifically seeking and the geographic locations where jobs are concentrated. In a more limited capacity, they may also be indicative of the current standards and expectations of the field as a whole (Harper, 2012). For this reason, researchers at the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development investigated job postings in the child care field to understand more about the demand for child care workers in New Jersey. This analysis focuses on child care job postings for positions in professional child care settings, particularly licensed center-based employment. As job titles and positions in the child care field can be broad and rather ill-defined, general analyses of job postings, using technologies such as Lightcast, often capture data from positions that fall into the categories of babysitter and nanny. While information on babysitters and nannies is certainly important and falls within the broader child care field, these positions are out of scope for this analysis. For this reason, the Heldrich Center conducted a more granular analysis of job positions with job titles that fall within professional child care settings.

CHILD CARE JOB POSTINGS

▲ Methodology

For this brief, Heldrich Center researchers analyzed job posting data of the child care workforce in New Jersey in October 2023. The job posting analysis included systematically examining descriptions extracted from LinkedIn and Indeed of 2,758 job postings for the child care sector in New Jersey. The web-scraping process captured job postings that were active and open on LinkedIn and Indeed in October 2023 with job postings dating back one year.

The job posting analysis focused on those working with infants through kindergarten-age children in the child care sector. Job search terms specifically included:

- Early childhood,
- Day care,
- Preschool, and
- Early child care.

To be able to synthesize the job posting data, researchers developed a categorization scheme to group positions with similar job functions together. This yielded 10 categories that included up to 217 titles per position grouping (see Table 1 for the categorization breakdown). The teacher/educator/instructor category contained the greatest variety of job titles. The “other” category was created to serve as a catchall for positions that did not fit into established categories. Additionally, some employers put out blanket postings in which one post advertised multiple job openings. This occurred most frequently as advertisements for positions that were classified as teacher/educator/instructor and assistant teacher/teacher aide. Researchers created a separate category to capture these dual-opening positions under teacher/educator/instructor and/or assistant teacher/teacher aide.

This study’s findings, discussed in the next section of this brief, provide a detailed description of these postings with insights into the preferences and needs of employers in the child care sector. The findings should be interpreted with knowledge of the limitations of these analyses. Due to the nature of automated web scraping, it is not possible to discern whether there are duplicates in the data. The job postings also represent a point in time and cannot speak to broader longitudinal trends in the demand for child care workers. Researchers also acknowledge that the job postings from LinkedIn and Indeed do not represent the universe of all child care job postings available online or in the labor market. While employers can post jobs on LinkedIn for free, there is a cost to post multiple job postings at the same time and promote the postings for greater exposure. Similarly, employers can post on Indeed for free or pay to post a sponsored job that is prioritized for increased visibility with candidates. Furthermore, LinkedIn and Indeed contain different data fields and different reporting formats. Researchers used discretion when aggregating the data and note where data come from in each of this brief’s subsections and how the data sources and ability to aggregate may affect the results.

▲ Number of Child Care Job Postings

There were 2,758 job postings available on LinkedIn and Indeed in October 2023. The web scraping yielded two times more relevant job postings from Indeed (1,867) than from LinkedIn (891). This is likely to be a result of the intended audience and purpose of each platform. LinkedIn is marketed as a social platform designed to foster professional relationships through networking and includes a job board, whereas Indeed’s primary service is an Internet-based job board.

Job title and position terminology in the child care sector varies considerably. Positions with similar types of work may have several different job titles across different employers (i.e., early childhood educator, daycare instructor, child care associate teacher). A majority of job postings in the child care sector were for teacher/educator/instructor positions. Table 1 shows that 66% of LinkedIn and 49% of Indeed job postings analyzed were for teacher/educator/instructor positions. The second most prevalent position type was assistant teacher/teacher aide with 16% of LinkedIn and 21% of Indeed job postings.

TABLE 1. Percent Breakdown of Job Position Categories of Job Postings on LinkedIn and Indeed, October 2023 Career Planning

Job Position Category	LinkedIn	Indeed
Director	3%	4%
Assistant Director	1%	2%
Manager/Supervisor	1%	3%
Teacher/Educator/Instructor	66%	49%
Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	16%	21%
Teacher/Educator/Instructor and Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	1%	4%
Care Provider/Giver/Worker	2%	3%
Assistant/Aide	2%	5%
Paraprofessional	1%	1%
Other	5%	6%

Source: LinkedIn and Indeed

Percentages in Table 1 may not sum to 100% to reflect the exclusion of babysitter and nanny positions noted earlier in this brief.

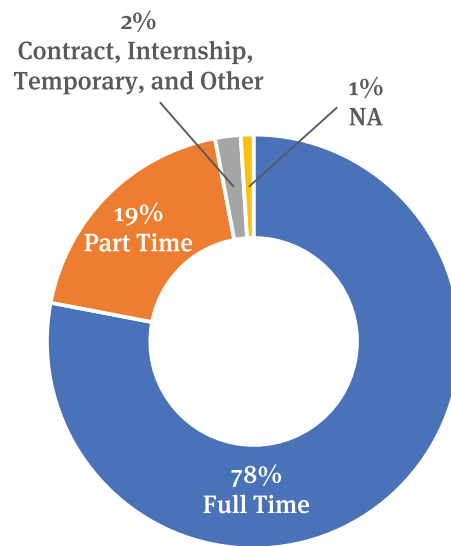
N = 2,578

To complement the job position categories in Table 1, researchers coded the postings for two other position characteristics: whether the job was advertised as related to special education and whether the position was a substitute. LinkedIn and Indeed had the same percentage (5%) of special education-related job postings. Job postings were determined to fall in the special education category based on the job title and/or details (preschool special education teacher, teacher-early intervention program, etc.) included in the job description. Additionally, LinkedIn had a higher percentage of substitute positions (7%) than Indeed (3%).

▲ Child Care Job Posting Employment Type

The data on full-time versus part-time job postings come only from the LinkedIn postings (N = 891). Most job postings on LinkedIn were for full-time positions. As shown in Figure 1, 78% of job postings on LinkedIn were for full-time positions, with 19% being part-time positions, and 2% were split between contract, internship, and temporary positions. The remaining 1% was not available in the dataset. Information on employment type was not available on Indeed.

FIGURE 1. Employment Type of Job Postings, LinkedIn, October 2023



Source: LinkedIn

▲ Child Care Job Postings Wages and Salaries

The data on wages and salaries come only from Indeed (N = 1,867), as LinkedIn did not include salary information in the dataset. Wage and salary information was provided in a variety of formats on Indeed. To clean and summarize the information, researchers first sorted the data into hourly, daily, and weekly wages as well as annual salary by each job position category. Next, they cleaned the data to allow for aggregation and the presentation of summary statistics. For postings that included a range, researchers took the average of the minimum and maximum amounts stated. In cases where verbiage was used to describe the payment scale, the verbiage was removed. For example, “From \$16 per hour” was taken as \$16 per hour and “up to \$45,000” was taken as \$45,000. Researchers then calculated average amounts and present in this brief the findings for hourly wages and annual salaries, the two most advertised wage structures, at 78% and 21%, respectively. Only 1% of job postings advertised daily wages, and less than 1% advertised weekly wages.

Table 2 presents average hourly wages for those positions that advertised compensation by hour. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of all Indeed child care postings were advertised with hourly wages. Looking at the most numerous job position salaries, teacher/educator/instructor job positions advertised an hourly average pay rate of \$17.68 but spanned a range of almost \$13 to \$60 per hour. The average hourly wage for an assistant teacher/teacher aide was advertised at about \$1.50 per hour less at \$16.07, with a similar range of wages.

TABLE 2. Average Hourly Wages, Minimum and Maximum, by Job Position Category, Indeed, October 2023

Job Position Category	N	Hourly Wage Average	Hourly Wage Minimum	Hourly Wage Maximum
Teacher/Educator/Instructor	456	\$17.68	\$12.93	\$60.00
Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	270	\$16.07	\$13.00	\$60.00
Teacher/Educator/Instructor and Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	71	\$17.98	\$14.00	\$27.00
Other	55	\$20.11	\$14.00	\$85.00
Assistant/Aide	47	\$15.97	\$12.00	\$27.45
Care Provider/Giver/Worker	39	\$16.22	\$13.00	\$20.00
Director	28	\$21.23	\$15.00	\$40.00
Manager/Supervisor	14	\$22.49	\$18.00	\$28.00
Assistant Director	9	\$20.59	\$15.00	\$28.00
Paraprofessional	7	\$17.77	\$15.00	\$19.50

Source: Indeed

The data in Table 2 exclude babysitter and nanny positions as noted earlier in this brief.

Table 3 presents the average annual salaries for the 21% of Indeed positions that were advertised as salaried. The average advertised annual salaries for teacher/educator/instructor positions was \$56,462.05 and assistant teacher/teacher aide positions were listed at an average annual salary of \$31,403. This difference is notably greater than that of the average hourly wage advertised for these two groups.

TABLE 3. Average Yearly Salary, Minimum and Maximum, by Job Position Category, Indeed, October 2023

Job Position Category	N	Salary Average	Salary Minimum	Salary Maximum
Teacher/Educator/Instructor	171	\$56,462.05	\$12,500	\$105,050
Director	39	\$59,666.67	\$42,000	\$90,000
Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	25	\$31,403	\$20,000	\$48,534
Manager/Supervisor	19*	\$92,500	\$85,000	\$100,000
Assistant Director	10	\$45,661.30	\$40,000	\$55,000
Other	7	\$68,566.14	\$43,993	\$109,311
Paraprofessional	5	\$29,456.50	\$17,190	\$36,000
Teacher/Educator/Instructor and Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	5	\$39,600	\$25,000	\$42,000

Source: Indeed

* There were 19 postings for the same position at the same company.

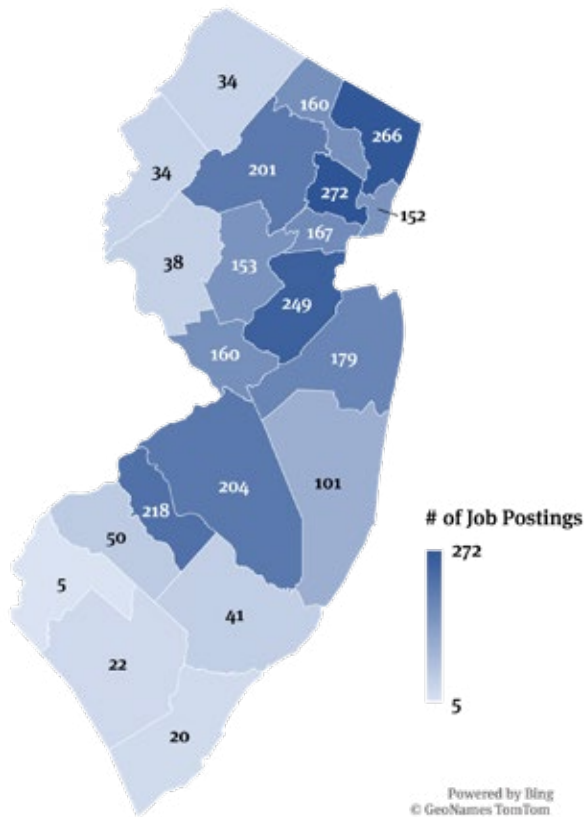
▲ Child Care Postings by County

While child care job postings were present across New Jersey, there were higher concentrations of job postings found in more densely populated regions consistent with population distribution and the distribution of licensed child care centers in the state (see Figure 2). The northern region of the state accounted for nearly half (47%) of the job postings, with the central region following at 32%, and the southern region at 20%. Bergen and Essex counties had the highest percentage of job postings of all New Jersey counties at 10% each

Of the three regions, LinkedIn had a higher percentage of job postings from employers in the central part of the state (39%) and Indeed had a greater share of job postings of employers in the northern part of the state (51%). The southern region of the state had the least representation in job postings at 20%, despite encompassing the Philadelphia metropolitan region. Overall, these percentages follow the population distribution in the state.

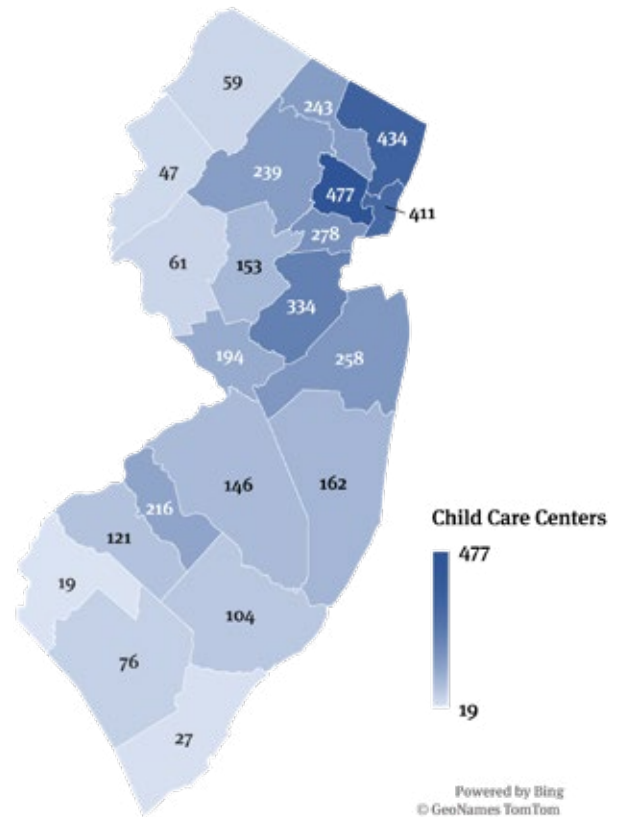
For comparison, Figure 3 highlights the distribution of licensed child care centers in New Jersey. The concentration of job postings largely mirrors the distribution of licensed child care centers across the state.

FIGURE 2. Total Job Postings, by County, October 2023



Source: LinkedIn and Indeed

FIGURE 3. Number of Licensed Child Care Centers, by County, August 2024



Source: New Jersey Department of Children and Families

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Heldrich Center’s analysis indicates a variability of demand for teacher/educator/instructor positions throughout New Jersey, with higher demand following geographies with a higher concentration of licensed child care centers and population distribution. Despite the number of job postings, advertised wages were low. Most teacher/educator/instructor job postings featured hourly wages at an average pay rate of \$17.68 per hour. Moreover, the hourly minimum in the range of wages for these postings was \$12.93, below New Jersey’s minimum wage for “most employers” at \$14.13 per hour in 2023 (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2023). Other job posting categories, including assistant teacher/teacher aide, assistant/aide, care provider/giver/worker, among others, also featured hourly minimum wage ranges that fell below New Jersey’s minimum wage for most employers. It is possible that some of the postings came from small employers, which would fall under different minimum wage standards. Specifically, the minimum wage for employers with fewer than six employees was \$12.93 per hour in 2023, which could account for the ranges

observed in this analysis, provided that those job postings came from small employers. These job postings did not feature any information on benefits and/or compensation packages, including but not limited to, free child care for staff working at the center, retirement plans, paid time off, or tuition reimbursement. Job postings primarily featured wage as a key descriptor of compensation for the position, which may not fully capture the benefit offerings for work in the child care field.

Taking a broader view of the findings, the advertised wage of \$17.68 per hour for the role of teacher/educator/instructor is particularly low, in comparison to the New Jersey mean hourly wage of \$34.08 (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2024). While researchers' calculation of mean wage is derived from job posting data with a limited sample, there is a clear disparity in the rate of pay that is advertised to child care workers and that of the state average across all occupations. This finding is coupled with the fact that the predominant wage structure for job postings in the child care field was hourly wages. This research showed that 78% of job postings featured hourly compensation. Comparatively, salaried job postings featured more competitive wages, with teacher/educator/instructor job postings' average salary at \$56,462.05, but were far less prevalent (21%) in the data. Overall, these findings are illustrative of a workforce that is not competitively compensated, particularly when paid hourly. Because these findings are based on job postings and not wage data, these wages provide insight into the intentions of employers. In other words, it can be seen that the current and future intentions for employers are to continue to offer low wages to child care workers.

These findings have implications for understanding the challenging nature of the child care job market. Job posting analyses, such as the one presented in this brief, provide both job seekers and policymakers with information that can inform and shape decisions regarding career paths, training programs, and economic policies. While the demand for child care workers is high, the supply of workers interested in and pursuing employment in the child care field has not kept pace with the need. This mismatch of advertised low wages combined with the high demand for child care workers potentially speaks to a larger narrative about market failure in the sector. Market failure in the child care sector implies that employers are not suppressing wages, but rather struggling to offer competitive living wages to current and prospective employees in the child care sector. While this analysis is limited to evidence related to the demand for child care workers in New Jersey and the dynamics of employment in the child care sector, namely wage, wage structure, employment type, and location, it folds into a broader conversation about a challenging landscape for child care workers in the state. The complexities of wages in the child care sector suggest that policy intervention from the state and federal government may be necessary to increase wages and address the supply shortfall of child care workers.



The [Heldrich Center for Workforce Development](#) is devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policymaking and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective education and training programs. It is deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

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