



CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY



AUGUST 2023

BRIEF 1, PAGE 1

INTRODUCING THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY

The Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey is a comprehensive, citywide project led by the [Saul Zaentz Early Education Initiative](#) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) in collaboration with the [Cambridge Office of Early Childhood](#).

As the City of Cambridge implements a system of universal preschool, families with young children will need clear information about the types of early childhood programs available to them. The Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey supports the city's efforts to describe its early care and education options by mapping the composition of its early childhood programs, as well as the makeup and experiences of the city's early care and education workforce.

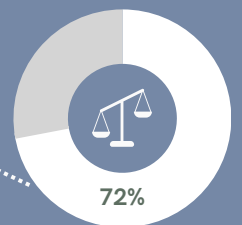
The Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey has two main objectives:

1. To chart the composition of the city's early care and education workforce.
2. To describe and share early educators' experiences.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A high-quality system of early care and education is essential to the stability of a community's workforce and a vital part of its economy. As the pandemic laid bare, access to affordable child care for working families is crucial to their financial well-being and a central component of any community's infrastructure. Without access to consistent, affordable, high-quality child care, many working families—and particularly working mothers—are pushed to either exit the workforce or make tough decisions weighing child care providers' cost, quality, and availability.

When the Zaentz Initiative [surveyed parents and guardians](#) of young children across Massachusetts in Spring 2020, just after the widespread COVID-19 shutdowns, 72% said they worried about balancing work and family responsibilities.



Other estimates from Massachusetts indicate that lack of access to early care and education during the pandemic resulted in lost earnings for individuals, lower worker productivity, added costs for employers, and lost tax revenue for the state—roughly \$2.7 billion lost funds for the Commonwealth overall.

By systematically documenting and describing who makes up the early care and education workforce, as well as their experiences and needs in and out of the classroom, findings from the Pulse Survey can help surface existing strengths and areas in need of increased support for early educators— thus supporting higher-quality care for children and a more stable and productive local economy.



DESCRIBING AND SHARING OUR PROCESS

The Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey can serve as a model for other communities seeking answers to similar questions about the composition, experiences, and quality of life of their early education workforce. Here is an overview of our approach to creating and completing the Early Childhood Pulse Survey in the City of Cambridge:

A ROAD MAP TO BUILDING A PULSE SURVEY

PARTNER & PLAN

1

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY ORGANIZATIONS AND ALIGN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

BUILD THE SAMPLE

2

POOL THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES OF PARTNERS TO CO-CREATE A SAMPLE OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

SEEK FEEDBACK

3

FIND AND ASK KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR INPUT ON THE ISSUES THAT FEEL MOST PRESSING TO CAPTURE, AND ON THE BEST WAYS TO REACH POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS.

CREATE THE SURVEY

4

USE FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO INFORM SURVEY DESIGN AND PLANS FOR DISSEMINATION.

DISSEMINATE

5

TAILOR OUTREACH TO THE NEEDS AND PREFERENCES OF THE EDUCATORS IN THE COMMUNITY.

NEXT STEPS INCLUDE CLEANING, ANALYZING, AND SHARING THE DATA.



Below we describe in detail how we applied these five steps to design and complete the Cambridge Pulse Survey over the course of just six months.

STAGE 1 (JANUARY-FEBRUARY)—PARTNER & PLAN

1

The Cambridge Pulse team partnered with the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood. Pooling the resources and aligning the goals between COEC and the Cambridge Pulse team was important for building trust and commitment to the survey effort among Cambridge's community of early childhood educators. The Pulse Team designed the Cambridge Pulse Survey to align with OEC's goal of conducting a comprehensive landscape analysis as it prepares to implement the Cambridge Preschool Program (universal pre-k).

STAGE 2 (FEBRUARY-MARCH)—DEFINE THE SAMPLE

2

After initial planning, the Pulse & OEC teams co-created a comprehensive list of programs to include in the sample. For this round of the survey, we limited our sample to formal, group-based child care settings.* This involved consolidating information gathered from OEC's databases, a citywide search tool called [Find It Cambridge](#), and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's licensed [child care search](#) feature.

STAGE 3 (MARCH)—SEEK INPUT

3

To ensure that the Pulse Survey accurately captured the experiences of early educators working in the city, and that it was framed in a way that would invite early educator participation, the Pulse Team conducted three focus groups with family child care leaders, center directors, and early educators. In each focus group, we posed the following questions:

- What should we ask early educators in the City of Cambridge about their experience?
- How should we ask these questions?

We thoroughly documented the responses, capturing both broad themes and specific feedback. Seeking input from early educators about the survey's design and dissemination also built awareness of the survey and community buy-in.

STAGE 4 (MARCH-APRIL)—CREATE THE SURVEY

4

Drawing on feedback from the focus groups, as well as design inspiration from the [Early Learning Study at Harvard](#) (ELS@H), the Pulse Team developed and programmed a survey to capture early educator experience across seven categories: Program Information, Classroom/Enrollment, Program Operations, Professional Development, Data Collection, Compensation/Benefits, and Teacher Wellbeing.

STAGE 5 (MAY-JULY)—DISSEMINATE

5

In addition to building educator awareness of the survey through focus groups prior to survey launch, the Pulse team led an extensive outreach effort consisting of mass mailers, personalized messages, in-person visits, and phone calls. The survey was open for just over two months and yielded responses from nearly 70% of programs in the sample.

Briefs 2-5 of this series will outline who responded to the survey, and what we learned from their responses.

*Child care programs licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), or programs embedded in larger (EEC licensed-exempt) k-8 schools.



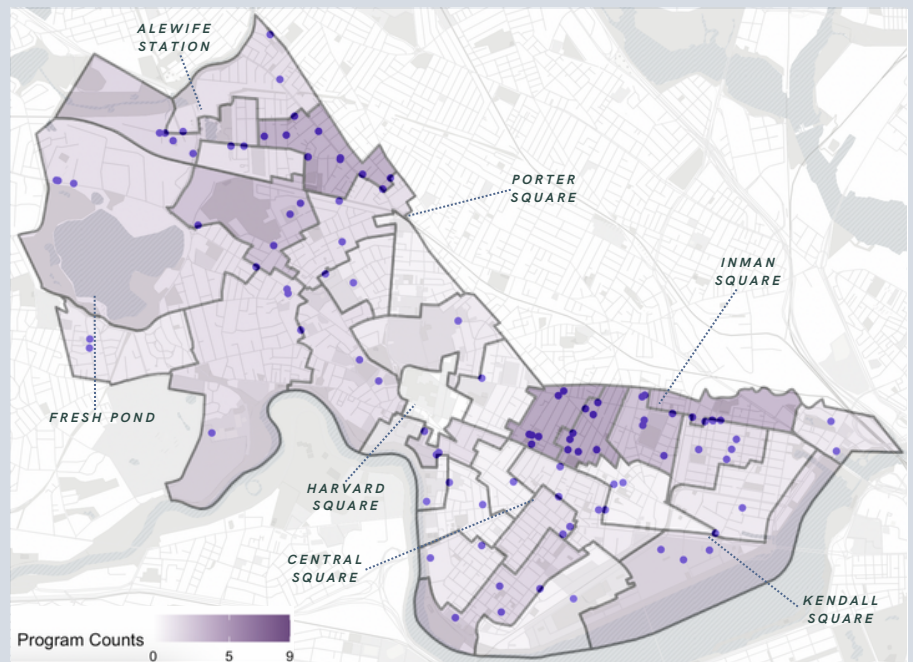
THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY: PROGRAMS AND PROVIDERS

In Spring 2022, all early educators working with children in group-based early education settings were invited to participate in the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey. This brief documents some of our preliminary findings about the early education workforce in Cambridge.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

We identified 114 early education programs across the city for children birth through age five. For the purposes of this brief, we call these early education settings "group-based" because they all serve children in programs that are licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) or are early education classrooms embedded in larger elementary school programs. They represent formal early care and education settings not served by family, friend, or neighbor care.

The 114 early care and education settings that were eligible to participate in the Pulse Survey are represented in this map by blue dots, organized within voter district zones. They are a subset of the larger community of early care and education settings in the City of Cambridge. Our survey focused on group-based, formal settings, though we know families are also served by family, friend, and neighbor care. For additional information about how we defined the sample included in our survey, please see Brief 1.



**GROUP-BASED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION
PROGRAMS IN CAMBRIDGE BY VOTER DISTRICT**

We organized these 114 programs into the following categories based on several key characteristics:

PUBLIC SCHOOL PREKINDERGARTEN

Refers to Public School or Department of Human Services programs; eligible to residents of Cambridge, slots determined via lottery.

PREDOMINANTLY SUBSIDIZED

Refers to programs that are focused primarily on supporting low-income families and provide subsidized slots to children; eligibility based on income requirements.

CENTER-BASED: NETWORK

Refers to all private programs, both for- and non-profit, that have more than one location (either in or outside of Cambridge.)

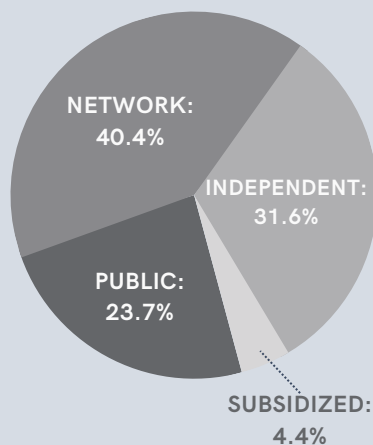
CENTER-BASED: INDEPENDENT

Refers to all private programs, both for- and non-profit, that have just one location.



The Pulse Survey was open for just over two months and yielded responses from 70% of the 114 programs.

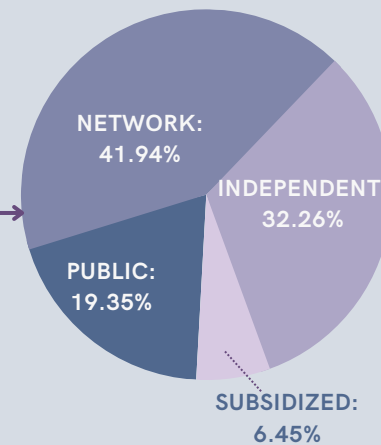
ALL 114 PROGRAMS,
BROKEN DOWN BY
PROGRAM TYPE



70% OF PROGRAMS
RESPONDED



ALL 70% OF RESPONDING
PROGRAMS, BROKEN DOWN
BY PROGRAM TYPE



As illustrated in the charts above, the the distribution of program types from survey respondents is representative of the distribution of eligible program types throughout the city.

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT
RESPONDING PROGRAMS?

58%

operate on a full-year
calendar



49%

serve infants
(less than 15 months)



68%

serve toddlers
(15-36 months)



92%

serve preschoolers
(3- and 4-year-olds)



WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT EARLY
EDUCATORS IN GROUP-BASED SETTINGS?

94% identify as female.

77% identify as White; 17% as Black or African
American; 7% as Asian**



14% identify as Hispanic, Latine/x, or of Spanish
origin

Their average age was 41 years (with a minimum of
20 and a maximum of 75)

The majority of respondents within each program type-
Independent, Network, Subsidized, and Public- were
teachers. Of the full group of respondents:

76% work directly with children in roles such as
teacher, lead teacher, assistant teacher, and
paraprofessional



13% support those working directly with children
in roles including coach, staff coordinator, or
program director

5% are owners/operators of their program

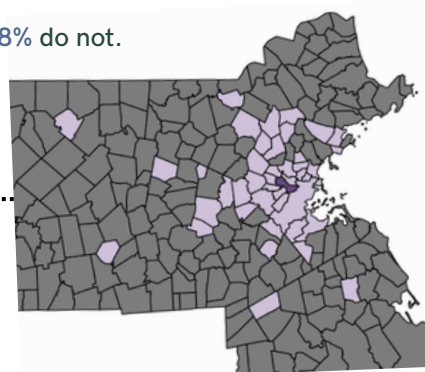
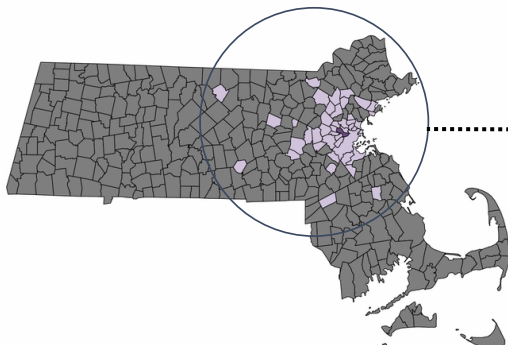
* "Other" represents respondents who did not identify which program they belong to when filling out the Pulse Survey.

** A small percentage of respondents identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Respondents were allowed to make more than one choice, therefore percentages do not add to 100.



WHERE DO CAMBRIDGE'S EARLY EDUCATORS LIVE?

22% live in the City of Cambridge, while 88% do not.



The majority of respondents live in towns or cities that have lower average income per capita than Cambridge. Said another way, most early educators who work in Cambridge live in places with a lower cost of living than Cambridge.

WHAT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS?



SCHOOLING

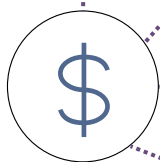
- 8% hold a Vocational/Technical or Associates degree
- 31% hold a Bachelor's degree
- 35% hold a Master's degree

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

- 75% hold a certificate from the Department of Early Education and Care
- 14% hold a certificate in Special Education
- 10% hold a certificate in bilingual education

HOW MUCH DO THEY EARN?

The median annual household income range of survey respondents is \$50,000-75,000. The majority of respondents report having more than one adult contributing to household income.



63% of respondents are salaried at their programs.

The average salary range for administrators is \$50,000-75,000, while that of teachers is \$40,000-50,000.

The average hourly rate for non-salaried teachers is \$22.00-24.00, and that of those not working directly with children is \$24.00-26.00.

15% of respondents report holding a second job in addition to their work as an early educator

35% of respondents report having children under the age of 18 living with them.

These numbers should be understood relative to local economic conditions. While the average salary ranges noted above are higher than the national average for early educators (which was \$24,000 - \$30,000 per year in 2019 according to [The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment](#)), the median household income in Cambridge is \$112,000 according to the most recent census data, and a living wage for a two-income household with one child in Cambridge is \$38.69/hr according to the [Living Wage Calculator](#). When situated in context, wages for early educators working in Cambridge are low.



THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY: EARLY EDUCATOR WELLBEING

While the pandemic created immense challenges for educators at all levels, rates of turnover in the field of early care and education are much higher than those in the K-12 system. To address workforce retention, it is important to learn more about why early educators might be leaving the field, and what they need in order to stay. We asked a series of questions about the early education workforce's quality of life, and what they might need to improve their experiences in the City of Cambridge.

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT EARLY EDUCATOR FINANCIAL WELLBEING?



CAMBRIDGE'S EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE PROFESSIONALS EARN SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN AREA AVERAGES, AND TOO LITTLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY IN THE CITY.

"We should be more valued and paid wages so that we can live in the communities that we work."*

Early educators in Cambridge have an average total household income of \$50,000-\$75,000, while the average household income in Cambridge is \$112,565.

Early educators in Cambridge make an average hourly wage of \$20-\$22, which is less than the living wage for a single person living in the area, and less than the living wage for a two-income household with one child.

The upper bound of the average annual salary for early childhood educators is \$50,000, while the typical wage for people working in education in the area is \$70,000.

When asked what they would change about their role, most educators said they wish the pay was higher. One educator said, "I wish I was able to live closer to my job. Unfortunately, I cannot afford to live in Cambridge."



LOW WAGES PUSH SOME OF CAMBRIDGE'S EARLY EDUCATORS TO HOLD SECOND JOBS.

Of the early educators who responded to the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse survey, 15% hold another part- or full-time job; this includes early educators who work in programs that operate on a full-year calendar.



CAMBRIDGE'S EARLY EDUCATION WORKFORCE REPORT EXPERIENCING SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL STRESS.

Early educators working in Cambridge report a high need for support in paying for basic needs expenses with their current salaries, which further illuminates the need for higher wages for the workforce in the City.

70% need financial support due to income or employment disruption.

64% need support paying bills.

70% need support paying for food.

"I can't afford to pay for groceries ... and I make much more than the average national childcare salary. Childcare workers deserve livable wages."



WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT BENEFITS?



EARLY EDUCATORS RECEIVE FEWER PAID SICK DAYS AND LESS TIME OFF THAN K-12 EDUCATORS, EVEN THOUGH MOST WORK ON A FULL-YEAR CALENDAR.

Cambridge's early educators, the majority of whom work on a full-year calendar, receive an average of 8 paid sick days and 12 personal days for the entire year. In contrast, first year Cambridge Public School K-12 educators receive 15 paid sick days throughout the academic year.

8 paid sick days is particularly low for a workforce that experiences high exposure to illness; when asked what they would change about their field, one educator said, "more sick leave due to always getting sick from kids." This was echoed by others, including one who said, "[we need] more PTO, sick time most of all. It is not enough days for how often we are exposed to illness."



EARLY EDUCATORS ARE STRUGGLING TO PAY FOR THEIR HEALTH COVERAGE.

While the majority of early educators have access to health insurance through their programs, 70% report needing support to pay for it.

"This job is too emotionally and physically draining, without enough benefits or time off."

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?



EDUCATORS ARE FEELING EXHAUSTED...

One in five early educators report feeling emotionally drained from their work several times per week. In addition to emotional exhaustion, early educators report the significant physical strain of their work.

"As I grow older, I worry about the toll the physicality of this job will have on me. I would love to be in this field for the rest of my working career, but I am already feeling the long term exhaustion this job can have, only 10 years in."



... AND STRESSED...

Over 50% of educators report experiencing stress due to the lack of control over decision-making in their own classroom, lack of opportunities for professional improvement, and feeling that their personal opinions are not valued.

"We work 8:30 to 5:30 every day. Administrators are in the classroom every day because there is not enough staff. All staff are exhausted by the end of the day. Yet, we keep coming back because the children and families are important to us."

...BUT THEY REMAIN ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK DESPITE THE MANY CHALLENGES THEY FACE.



When asked what they most enjoy about their role as an early educator, the most common responses highlighted the fulfillment educators feel in their work with children.



THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY: EARLY EDUCATOR PREFERENCES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Early education professionals require and deserve access to professional development (PD) that help grow their preexisting skills and knowledge, as well as help them develop new ones. Early care and education programs spend a considerable portion of their funds on professional development; yet little is known about what types of PD early educators actually receive, and what their preferences for PD are with respect to content and format. Cambridge's early educators shared their perspectives on this topic through their responses to the Pulse Survey.

WHAT DO EDUCATORS CURRENTLY RECEIVE & WHAT DO THEY WISH TO RECEIVE?

In Spring 2022, Pulse Survey respondents identified all topics of professional development from a list of fifteen that they had received since September 2021 (shown below).

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1) Diversity, equity, and inclusion | 7) Center or school compliance, regulations, or reporting | 11) Working with English language learners |
| 2) Behavior management | 8) Partnering with children's families | 12) Mathematics instruction |
| 3) Social and emotional learning | 9) Literacy and language instruction | 13) Using technology in your program |
| 4) Curricular or pedagogical approaches | 10) Program leadership (managing staff, business practices) | 14) Science instruction |
| 5) Observation and assessment | | 15) Art music and movement |
| 6) Working with students with disabilities | | |

Respondents then ranked their top three preferences for PD from the same list.

TAKEAWAYS:

At the time of the survey, the top five topics of professional development that early educators received that school year were:

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION	BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING	CURRICULAR OR PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES	COMPLIANCE, REPORTING, AND REGULATIONS
(62.62%)	(54.67%)	(53.74%)	(45.79%)	(44.86%)

We compared these topics to those early educators ranked as their most preferred, and we noticed some differences between PD experiences they currently receive and those they wish to receive.

EARLY EDUCATORS RECEIVE TRAINING ON SOME TOPICS THAT ALIGN WITH THEIR PREFERENCES.

Most early educators receive training in DEI, behavior management, and SEL.

These topics are also ranked among their most desired for PD.

EARLY EDUCATORS WISH TO RECEIVE MORE TRAINING IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO REQUIRE SPECIALIZED SERVICES.

Low numbers of early educators reported receiving training in working with children who have disabilities and English language learners.

These two topics ranked high among early educators' most desired.

EARLY EDUCATORS RECEIVE TRAINING ON SOME TOPICS THAT DO NOT ALIGN WITH THEIR PREFERENCES.

High numbers of early educators reported receiving PD in the areas of "compliance, reporting, and regulations" and "observation and assessment."

These topics were ranked among their least preferred.



WHICH STRUCTURAL FEATURES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO EARLY EDUCATORS?

In addition to *topics* of professional development, early educators shared which structural features (e.g. time, place, format) of PD experiences they most prefer by responding to a choice task in the Pulse Survey. This task, called a conjoint experiment, is a tool often used in market research wherein survey respondents are asked to choose between two hypothetical profiles of an experience.

Pulse Survey respondents were posed the following question:

"If two professional development programs were otherwise identical in every other way – same topic, same cost – which would you prefer?"

They were then presented with two hypothetical profiles of a professional development with eight features and asked to choose between them. Below is an example of two hypothetical profiles:

Feature	Option 1	Option 2
Location	Online	In-person, in Cambridge
Type	Professional Learning Community	Specialized training (e.g., workshop course, seminar, conference)
Time of day	Morning (before 8am)	Evening (after 6pm)
Led by	Another educator	An expert in the field
Feedback	No opportunities for personal feedback	Opportunities for personal feedback
Materials	Provides materials for your classroom	Provides materials for your classroom
Modeling	Opportunities to see new practices modeled	Opportunities to see new practices modeled
Practice	No opportunity to practice new skills	Opportunity to practice new skills

TAKEAWAYS:

CONVENIENCE IS KEY.

Educators expressed preferences for PD offered online or in-person at their programs, as opposed to off-site. They also expressed preferences for training during lunch-time or in the afternoon, as opposed to early in the morning or in the evening.

CREDIBILITY MATTERS.

Early educators expressed a preference for PD that is led by an expert in the field, followed by a preference for another educator, as opposed to PD led by an administrator.

These findings are consistent with how early educators describe their preferences:

"[I wish we had] professional development that is offered within our paid hours."



"[I wish we had] more time for teachers to plan and take workshops or professional learning DURING school time or allowing for extra time in the mornings or afternoon to do this without feeling burned out or exhausted."



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Understanding early educator preferences when it comes to PD topic and structure can help decision-makers deliver content in a way that is most aligned with what early educators say they need to best support the children in their care. Reflecting these preferences in a PD plan may ultimately lead to increased attendance and engagement.



THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY: EARLY EDUCATOR STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The Pulse Survey included a series of open-ended questions where respondents could describe what they enjoy most and what they wish they could change about their role as an early educator. A consistent theme was that Cambridge's early educators wish others knew more about the vast, multifaceted, and challenging nature of their role. This final brief showcases early educators' own descriptions of the greatest strengths, joys, and challenges of their role.

What do you *ENJOY*
most about your role as
an early educator?

LOVE + APPRECIATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

"Being with the children. They are a gift."

"The kids and their raw sense of wonder."

"I love learning from children! Young children are wise, brilliant, and help me to remember why the world is a good place."

"Children's engagement, their curiosity, [and] their honest, unbiased nature."

"The children that I work with, their curiosity and brilliant minds. I love their creative spirits, humor, kindness, and general approach to life. I adore four and five year olds."

"I love being a part of children's growth and learning, while I learn and grow alongside them."

"I like hearing children explain the world around them."

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

"Developing meaningful relationships with children and families."

"Giving parents new strategies to learn through play."

"Working in partnership with the families."

"Working with and connecting with families to build community brings me great joy."

"Helping families new to the US make connections and feel at home."

VALUE OF COLLEAGUES

"I am in awe of the teachers I work alongside -- they are amazing, talented, creative individuals who constantly remind me why I am in this field."

"Working with my coworkers who are all kind and supportive people. Every day I wake up able to face the day because of them."

"Learning from highly qualified teachers."

CREATIVE NATURE OF THE JOB

"I find creating a classroom environment and building unique curriculum based on the children's interests to be incredibly intellectually stimulating and rewarding."

"Thinking creatively about how to support children with disabilities or other unique learning needs, designing classrooms environments and curriculum."

"I love that I'm able to express myself as an educator and that having [an] emergent curriculum really allows us to be creative and provide experiences for the children that they're truly interested in and love."

"I enjoy planning and doing fun activities, especially messy ones and new ones. Giving children experiences that they will remember."

"Getting to plan creative and stimulating activities, freedom to create alongside the children the curriculum and activities that we focus on."

"Being creative"

"Designing curriculum"



What do you most wish you could **CHANGE** about your role as an early educator?

PUBLIC PERCEPTION + RESPECT

"I would like to change the world's view of ECE to be a public good, with as much respect for those who guide children from birth to 5 as is offered to those who support K-8."

"To be seen and valued by the general public as a teacher."

"The stigma that we are just glorified babysitters."

"That people respect what we do and that it is not just 'babysitting.'"

"I wish that we received more respect. That we were seen on par as public school teachers."

"I wish that people took this line of work seriously."

"More respect from the general public and understanding about the importance of our work."

"Greater societal appreciation and investment in early childhood education."

PAY + BENEFITS

"I wish I was making more than my younger brother,... who works as a waiter."

"I wish people could understand what we go through and could be compensated fairly for all the work we put into our job (including emotional labor.)"

"We should be more valued and paid wages that we can live in the communities that we work."

"I wish early childhood education was subsidized by the state/government so we could pay teachers higher wages without passing the costs to parents via tuition."

"More pay, more time off, more sick leave due to always getting sick from kids, better hours."

"Just more money. Inflation is making life as an early educator very difficult."

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

"I wish that we had more trauma-informed resources, personnel, and support to ensure that the environment works for all students."

"I wish that we had true planning time and time for collaboration with our teams."

"More time for paid planning, and more support when teachers are out. The teaching shortage is felt throughout my center."

"I wish I had more time for documenting and planning"

"I need prep time to create culturally responsive lessons."

"More time. More help. Real breaks from children. Time to meet with teachers as the same level."

"More paid time for planing curriculum, events, meetings with other teachers and interacting in different ways with families. Paid tuition for teachers' children. More professional development about learning differences and how to support children who have them."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

"I wish there were more opportunities for growth that did not involve becoming a director of some sorts, as many of us do not want that to be the next step in our journey... there are not many opportunities like this in our field."

"More professional development/training on special needs and behavioral issues."

"I would like to have more conversations with colleagues about pedagogy."



*What do you wish
OTHERS KNEW about
your role as an early
educator?*

"The joy that children bring to the class and that I derive from working with them is primarily what motivates me each day to put my best foot forward"

"I feel the profession isn't given the credit it is due and that others don't always recognize the essential and paramount role we play in not only the development of young children but helping our society function."

"I was told when I graduated in 1990 that the field of ECE was on the cusp of finally being a respected profession and that compensation was also going to reflect that change. Thirty years later- sadly, nothing has changed. In fact, I would argue it is actually worse."

"I wish that we were viewed as true professionals more of the time. I have 6 years of higher educational experience in this field, but I think a lot of people think our jobs could be done by anyone."

"I work with children who have severe disabilities. I work very hard every day. I love working with these children. But we need the school system to acknowledge how important our jobs are."

"Being an educator for young children is one of the best accomplishments I have done in my life. I left the field for a short period and then return. I honestly could not see myself doing anything else."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? ANNOUNCING THE CAMBRIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD PULSE SURVEY 2.0

As described in Brief #1, the aim of the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey was to support the city's efforts to describe the composition of Cambridge's early care and education programs, as well as the makeup and perspectives of its workforce. The findings outlined throughout this series of briefs highlight the experiences—both uplifting and challenging—that early educators face in their roles, and their perspectives on these experiences.

As Cambridge's Office of Early Childhood (OEC) moves toward implementing a citywide Universal Pre-K system—the Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP)—in September 2024, learning as much as possible about the individuals who make up the system can help ensure that CPP is responsive to the needs of the workforce.

To continue the effort to support the City's early childhood system-building, early education professionals who work with children from birth to age 5 will have another opportunity to share their insights and experiences. The Harvard Graduate School of Education in partnership with the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood is excited to announce the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey 2.0! This year's version will build on what was learned from the first Pulse Survey, with the aim of providing ongoing opportunities for early education professionals to share their perspectives and experiences about working within the Cambridge community. Keep an eye out for more information about the launch of Cambridge Pulse 2.0 this fall through the OEC newsletter and website!

If you have questions or would like to learn more about the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey, please reach out to us at: zaentz@gse.harvard.edu.