

Designing a Wage Increase Pilot

A Framework for Supporting Early Educators in Contra Costa County

By Anna Powell, Caitlin McLean, and Abby Copeman Petig

The pilot design project was funded by First 5 Contra Costa.

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Suggested Citation

Powell, A., McLean, C., & Copeman Petig, A. (2024). *Designing a Wage Increase Pilot: A Framework for Supporting Early Educators in Contra Costa County*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/report/contra-costa-ece-wage-pilot/>

Editor: Deborah Meacham

About CSCCE

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE), founded in 1999, is [the national leader](#) in early care and education workforce research and policy. CSCCE provides research and analysis on the preparation, working conditions, and compensation of the early care and education workforce. We develop policy solutions and create spaces for teaching, learning, and educator activism. Our vision is an effective public early care and education system that secures racial, gender, and economic justice for the women whose labor is the linchpin of stable, quality services.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment
University of California, Berkeley
2521 Channing Way #5555, Berkeley, CA 94720
cscce.berkeley.edu

Acknowledgments

The pilot design project was funded by First 5 Contra Costa. Thank you to the First 5 staff who worked with us to develop the pilot concept: Dr. Ruth Fernández, Executive Director; Sandra Naughton, Deputy Director; and Dr. Mackenzie Whipps, Early Childhood Program Officer.

Thank you to the members of the **Wage Supplement Advisory Group**:

Aideen Gaidmore, Marin Child Care Council
Benu Chhabra, Bay Area Professional FCC Network
Dr. Crystal McClendon-Gourdine, Contra Costa County Local Planning Council
Devorah Levine, Leshner Foundation
Dr. Dorothy Stewart, Old Firehouse School
John Jones, CocoKids
Marla Stuart, Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department
Monica Joseph, Contra Costa County Office of Education
Yaqueline Martinez, El Nuevo Mundo

Additionally, we extend our thanks to the educators who participated in anonymous focus groups and listening conversations facilitated by Clarity Social Research Group.

Thank you to the following individuals who work on **ECE wage supplements and guaranteed income pilots**, who participated in conversations with CSCCE during the development of this report:

Angel Duran Ramirez, California Workforce Registry, Child Care Alliance Los Angeles
Dr. Callie Silver, Thriving Providers Project, Stanford Center on Early Childhood
Diane Nicholson, Office of Child and Family Services, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Elise Crane, California Workforce Registry, Child Care Alliance Los Angeles
Jennifer Lopez, AidKit
Jonathan Mar, Children's Council SF
Julia Ford, AidKit
Kalayaan Domingo, King County, Washington
Kara Marshall, Children's Council SF
Dr. Leah Catching, San Francisco Department of Early Childhood
Madeline Hero, Children's Council SF
Susan Jeong, San Francisco Department of Early Childhood

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I. Introduction

“We do this because we love being around children. Part of me feels almost guilty saying it, but saying you do it for the love of the field, for the love of the children, has been an excuse to not pay people. You’re not doing it for money, but we all still have to pay our bills. We still should be compensated fairly.”

— Center-based educator

Early care and education (ECE) professionals, or early educators, open their doors every day knowing that their work matters. In Contra Costa County, more than nine out of ten early educators strongly agree that they are helping children grow and develop, and they similarly agree that their work makes a difference for young children and families. At the same time, however, only one half of child care center teachers and two thirds of family child care (FCC) providers feel respected for the work they do (Powell et al., 2024).

The lack of respect is reflected in their low pay: despite the complex, high-impact nature of their careers, early educators earn less than 98 percent of all other occupations nationally (McLean et al., 2021). Crucially, however, this pay does not reflect the value that families and communities place on early care and education; instead, it reflects a broken market where wages are largely funded by private tuition from families—and the vast majority of parents cannot afford to pay higher fees.

Economic stress is widespread in California, and early educators are not alone in facing challenges in making ends meet. As a consequence, **guaranteed income (GI) pilots** are increasing in popularity in cities and counties throughout the state and nationwide. By design, GI pilots focus on providing direct cash to participants with no strings attached. Direct cash is also a strategy sometimes used in early care and education to increase income and help talented early educators stay in the field. This type of strategy is called a **wage supplement**, since it provides payments to educators based on their ECE employment (McLean et al., 2019).

To retain and expand the pool of talented early educators, bold action is necessary. Policy changes at the state level are being developed and may bring increased earnings to a subset of providers who serve families receiving public financial assistance. However, without immediate local action, the majority of early educators will continue to earn below a living wage, which may drive them out of the workforce, negatively impacting the children and their families that rely on those providers. State policy changes will likely take several years to unfold. As a consequence, county-level action is not only necessary, but urgent.

First 5 Contra Costa supports launching a wage supplement pilot to meet the moment and address our county’s growing early childhood education shortage. In this report, we lay out a proposed pilot that could serve as a template for the county and the state as a whole.

II. Background

Contra Costa County is home to about 73,100 children under age six. About 29 percent of those children are Latine, 25 percent are White, 16 percent are multiracial, 13 percent are Asian, 6 percent are Black, and the rest are another race or ethnicity. Many families in the county with children under the age of six struggle to make ends meet, and about 9 percent of these families live in deep poverty (defined as living at 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, which means an annual income of \$13,875 for a family of four). In addition, 96 percent of families with a child under age 18 in Contra Costa have at least one parent in the labor force, and 72 percent have all available parents in the labor force.¹

¹ 2022 American Community Survey, retrieved from Table S1901 at data.census.gov.

To support families, our county is home to approximately 260 licensed early childhood education centers that serve children from birth through age five, and 765 licensed family child care providers operating in their own homes. These nurturing and vibrant learning environments reflect the ECE workforce, a highly skilled yet undervalued professional group of nearly 4,000 individuals (Powell et al., 2024).

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) estimates that center-based educators in Contra Costa County earn between \$18 and \$25 per hour, or \$37,000 to \$52,000 per year, depending on their job role. Median earnings for FCC providers fall between \$30,000 and \$35,900 per year. Moreover, many individuals in both settings lack access to benefits like retirement or health insurance. Low pay and a lack of benefits contribute to turnover in early care and education, including individuals who choose to pursue a career outside their passion in order to support themselves and their families (Powell et al., 2024).

Important Definitions

The **early care and education workforce** includes family child care providers and their assistants, along with center-based educators in direct care and supervision roles, such as directors, lead teachers, and assistants. Specific job titles vary, and educators may work in various types of programs, including California State Preschool, Head Start, and community-based settings. This pilot can serve only part of the ECE workforce in Contra Costa County (see **Pilot Design**, below, for more information).

Economic well-being describes the stability of a person's household finances, including their access to food, housing, and health care. It can also include worries about affording basic needs and the ability to continue working in early care and education, where wages are typically low.

Job **retention** refers to stability in employment for early educators, both as individuals and as a group. In a narrow sense, retention can mean holding the same job title at the same site. A more flexible definition of retention would allow movement between similar jobs, including job advancement (for instance, from assistant to lead teacher). For this pilot design, we focus on this broader definition to honor the fact that many job changes are positive and can still support the county's goals, even if it means movement of some workers between ECE programs throughout the county.

Historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion are embedded in the policies and systems that young children and families interact with every day, contributing to persistent differences in well-being outcomes based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and other social identities. In this project, we center **equity**, or fair treatment and access to opportunity, by first acknowledging that most providers of child care in Contra Costa are beholden to the underresourced early childhood system, and by focusing efforts on the communities with the highest current needs, which are based on historic underinvestment across multiple dimensions.

Guaranteed income (GI) pilots are direct cash assistance interventions that “create an income floor below which no one can fall and promote the dignity of all” (Guaranteed Income Pilots Dashboard, 2024). GI pilots have no strings attached, including no requirement to work.

Wage supplement pilots in early care and education are local or state programs to increase income. Prior to the pandemic, most wage supplements took the form of stipends or bonuses. These were typically annual payments designed to reward retention and/or educational attainment (McLean et al., 2019). During the pandemic, states began experimenting with more flexible or frequent wage supplements (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment [CSCCE], 2021). Many examples of ongoing payments now more closely resemble guaranteed income, though retention remains a common goal.

Policy Context

California invests in early care and education for families with low incomes through a patchwork of public funding sources, including vouchers (such as the California Alternative Payment Program, CAPP) and state contracts with specific program requirements (such as the California State Preschool Program, CSPP). These investments, however, are insufficient in size to reach all eligible families, and the amounts paid to ECE programs are too low to cover their actual operating costs (Workman, 2021). As a result, whether publicly or privately funded, ECE programs are unable to improve the wages they pay early educators.

Because the precarious ECE sector has no buffer against economic downturns, the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to cause mass closures (CSCCE, 2020). Advocates called for emergency actions on early care and education in 2020 to protect the welfare and well-being of the ECE workforce and the families they serve. In an effort to keep ECE programs open, the federal government empowered California and other states with direct pandemic relief funding to support early care and education. The largest of the relief packages, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), became a funding source for dozens of wage supplement initiatives around the country. We discuss some of these pilots in this report. For a detailed list of ARPA-funded compensation strategies in early care and education, refer to CSCCE's [database](#) (CSCCE, 2021).

Emergency actions at the beginning of the pandemic prevented a cascade of closures nationwide, but stable, ongoing public funding remains necessary in order to provide high-quality, widely available early care and education (CSCCE, 2020). Several states, including California, are beginning to restructure their outdated funding models and expand their funding streams to yield a more stable model. California plans to adopt what the federal government refers to as an **alternative methodology** for child care subsidies: in lieu of setting rates based on an outdated market rate survey, where pay is close to the minimum wage, states may instead set rates based on the **cost model** that estimates typical actual expenses to provide programming that meets legally required child:adult ratios, group size, and other quality elements. The cost model approach also includes sustainable early educator wages (Capito et al., 2022).

Unfortunately, overhauling subsidy rates will not address the broken ECE system as a whole, since public funds reach only a fraction of programs—and even that could take years. In short, Contra Costa cannot count on the state to address the dire shortages in early care and education.

First 5 Contra Costa's plan for an ECE wage supplement calls for swift action. A local pilot represents an interim opportunity to address low pay and set an example for the rest of the state.

Developing a Wage Pilot

In this report, we provide details on a proposed **pilot design**. We also provide a framework for **pilot implementation, evaluation, and budget**. A companion document, the *Budget Model*, includes an interactive tool to estimate the cost of the pilot.

Two previous reports provide foundational data for the pilot design: [CSCCE's report](#) on the ECE workforce in Contra Costa County (Powell et al., 2024) and a summary of pilot input sessions conducted by Clarity Social Research Group (2024). Clarity also convened and facilitated an Advisory Group, which gave input on the proposed pilot model.²

² Please refer to the **Acknowledgments** for a list of the Advisory Group members.

Additionally, we draw on a literature review of GI pilots and ECE wage supplements from around the country. We provide background on these examples in the **Appendices**. This report synthesizes best practices from these existing pilots with the local context provided by First 5 Contra Costa.

III. Pilot Design

In this section, we describe the timeline, participants, and payment schema for a proposed wage supplement pilot.

Timeline

In early care and education, wage supplements are typically funded for one or more years. Some programs have ongoing funding, particularly when operated by a state agency. Examples with ongoing funding include the Virginia Teacher Recognition Program and the Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. retention program.³

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, short-term wage initiatives proliferated with the support of federal relief dollars. The Rhode Island Early Educator Pandemic Retention Bonus Program and the Idaho Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant fall into this category. For a list of ARPA-funded wage pilots, refer to CSCCE's [database](#) (CSCCE, 2021).

In some cases, pilots initially supported by ARPA funding were made permanent through other funding sources. For instance, the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement allowed Maine to treat the ARPA-funded period as a ramp-up phase in enrollment. The program now offers richer benefits and reaches nearly all eligible early educators.

Outside of early care and education, guaranteed income pilots are most commonly funded for one year at a time, with a few exceptions lasting as many as three or five years. Examples include the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot (one year) and Los Angeles County's Breathe (three years).

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Following national best practice, Contra Costa's pilot should provide payments for one year at a minimum. However, a 24- to 30-month pilot would not only allow for a ramp-up phase (as in the example of Maine), but would also provide a better opportunity to measure educator retention between school years. Additionally, a post-payment data collection window would let the county explore whether turnover increased when payments concluded.

A sample timeline would be:

- Ramp-up phase with baseline data collection and participant enrollment (three to six months);
- Full implementation of payments (18 months); and
- Off-ramp phase after the end of payments (three to six months).

³ For links to all pilots mentioned in this report, refer to **Appendix 1**.

Participants

Eligibility Criteria

In ECE wage programs around the country, current work in early care and education is typically one of several requirements, and a minimum quality rating for the program is often in place. For example, North Carolina’s Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program requires that participants work at least 30 hours per week with children under age three in a licensed child care program, and the ECE program must have a rating of three stars or higher. Additionally, participants’ wages must fall below an income cap, and they must meet education requirements. Eligibility is assessed and reassessed at each payment. However, payments tied to quality ratings or degrees risk deepening inequities in the field by rewarding educators employed in programs with better funding and those who have more time or resources to pursue further education.

First 5 Contra Costa’s vision for a wage pilot plans to break from the historic trend of requiring quality ratings and degree requirements; instead, the pilot will adapt components of guaranteed income and basic income (GI/BI) pilots. Some GI/BI pilots serve specific target populations, such as Los Angeles County’s Breathe, which includes a cohort of foster youth. For the most part, however, GI/BI pilots have few participant requirements (also referred to as “no strings attached”) and don’t factor in employment or participation in services (hence the term “guaranteed”). However, since this pilot program is specifically designed to target ECE providers and retain them in the workforce, adopting a fully GI/BI approach would not be compatible.

To determine the target populations for Contra Costa’s pilot, the county should align its criteria to its intended goals and outcomes. For instance, the pilot will emphasize both job stability and economic well-being for early educators, with the goal of stabilizing the availability of high-quality ECE programs for children and families.

The proposed pilot will also take equity into account. In California, public funding for early care and education for children from low-income families includes both contract-based and voucher-based funding. When comparing these two funding approaches, we find that contract-based programs—for instance, California State Preschool and Head Start—receive more stable funding and thus offer more stable employment, especially during periods of economic upheaval like the COVID-19 pandemic (Kim et al., 2021). As such, an equity-driven approach for this pilot would prioritize programs that do not receive state or federal contracts like California State Preschool or Head Start program contracts.

Additionally, the county could select areas, such as zip codes, where households have low incomes or where parents face the most severe ECE providers shortages. In stakeholder input sessions with Clarity Social Research Group, First 5 Contra Costa gathered feedback from educators on pilot eligibility. Participants agreed that challenges to economic well-being are widespread in the ECE workforce, but they noted that educators working in higher-need communities could be a good group for the pilot. Clarity also facilitated an Advisory Group for the pilot, and these experts supported adopting a simple, streamlined eligibility approach to avoid unnecessary administrative burden.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Establish an eligibility framework that includes:

- Employment in roles in early care and education that involve directly working with children,
 - Including home- and center-based educators,
 - Including lead and assistant teachers/providers working with children from birth to age five, or any subset of that age group,
 - With a minimum number of work hours per week (for instance, 20 hours);

- Targeting or prioritizing participation by program type and region,
 - Excluding programs where enrollment is funded via a state or federal contract (including State Preschool, Head Start, and General Child Care/CCTR), unless there are insufficient applicants from noncontractor sites,⁴ and
 - Selecting a pilot footprint within the county, using a framework (such as priority zip codes in the county’s most recent needs assessment report) to address communities most impacted by ECE workforce shortages (see **Recommended Pilot Footprint**, below); and
- Additional criteria that may factor into educator outreach priority (for instance, promoting the opportunity with infant-toddler sites), but should not influence eligibility to apply, such as
 - No requirements related to quality rankings or educational attainment,
 - No requirements on how recipients use their money (“no strings”), and
 - Use of a lottery to randomly select sites or educators among the list of eligible applicants.

Recommended Pilot Footprint

Contra Costa County completes a needs assessment for early care and education every five years. Through this process, led by the local planning council, the county identifies zip codes where supply of licensed care lags the most behind demand. Some families intentionally choose family members or friends as their caregivers in lieu of licensed care, but the needs assessment helps illuminate gaps in ECE availability that prevent parents from having choices.

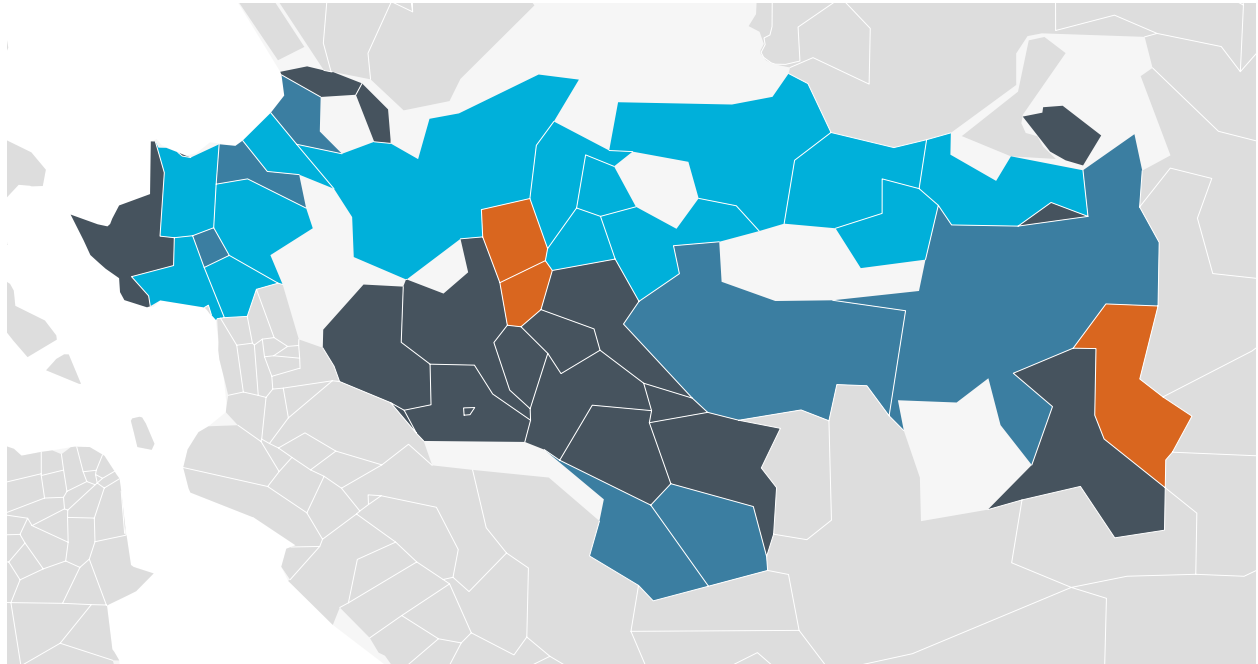
The most recent needs assessment took place in 2022. We recommend selecting zip codes identified as **Priority 1** for infants and toddlers (the least accessible type of early care and education) and excluding the three zip codes with the highest median family income. **Figure 1**, on page 10, shows where priority zip codes are located.

Additional considerations if First 5 creates a local control group in the lottery: Consider making three clusters of zip codes and then selecting a predetermined number of participants in each cluster in the lottery (see **Table 1**, on page 11). This method will ensure the lottery creates a list balanced across zip codes. Without this design, it will be less feasible to compare the control group to the participant group. **Cluster A** includes zip codes with a median family income below \$100,000 in 2022; **Cluster B** includes zip codes with a median household income between \$100,000 and \$130,000; and **Cluster C** includes zip codes with a median household income between \$130,000 and \$145,000. The three zip codes with median family household incomes above \$145,000 will be excluded from the pilot. For detailed tables on all zip codes in the county, refer to **Appendix 2**.

⁴ Other programs like the Child and Adult Care Food Program are not part of this framework, since they supplement rather than supplant per-child tuition for enrollment.

Figure 1. Map of Local Planning Council Priority Zip Codes, 2022

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ Excluded



Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

Note: Map reflects zip code priorities for infant-toddler care from the 2022 Needs Assessment (Contra Costa Local Planning Council, 2022). The three Priority 1 zip codes with the highest median family household income are marked “Excluded” in this schema.

Number of Participants

ECE wage pilots often serve all eligible applicants, so the number of participants is large. There are, however, exceptions. For instance, ExceleRate Illinois developed a salary scale pilot that only included providers in 34 programs in rural parts of the state; providers from other areas were not eligible. Additionally, Virginia implemented a lottery in one county in order to develop a control group for their Teacher Recognition Program. On the other hand, guaranteed income pilots typically select a fixed number of participants from a larger applicant pool and choose participants randomly. For example, California’s original Abundant Birth Project supported 150 recipients through pregnancy, and the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot has reached 5,000 people.

The wage pilot proposed for Contra Costa County cannot feasibly include broad eligibility, so it will more closely resemble the approach of a GI/BI pilot. In identifying the target sample size, the county should consider the cost implications of the number of participants and avoid reducing the payments to amounts that will not significantly support participating educators in an attempt to serve more or all eligible applicants. Historically, public funds have been spread thinly across services, leading to poor outcomes for child care availability and educator economic well-being (California Department of Education, 2024). This has also been the trend for several stipend and emergency relief programs aiming to support early educators—when spread too thin, their impact is insignificant.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: The eligible zip codes identified in **Table 1** include approximately 740 family child care providers and assistants and 680 center teachers and assistants in non-contractor sites. A subset of participants should be drawn from this group: a minimum of 60 FCC providers and assistants and 60 center teachers and assistants (120 participants combined).⁵

Table 1. Zip Code Cluster Assignment, By Median Family Household Income

Contra Costa County

ZIP Code	Estimated FCC Providers and Assistants (2023)	Estimated Center Teachers and Assistants (2023)	Median Family Household Income (2022)	Optional Cluster by Median Household Income (2022)
94804	70	24	\$84,616	A
94509	77	48	\$85,625	A
94520	31	48	\$86,035	A
94806	67	48	\$88,209	A
94565	105	80	\$95,927	A
94803	33	40	\$125,190	B
94531	102	24	\$127,420	B
94561	64	32	\$128,383	B
94518	44	48	\$128,750	B
94519	13	64	\$129,885	B
94521	41	104	\$139,586	C
94547	29	0	\$140,214	C
94553	28	72	\$142,485	C
94530	42	48	\$143,257	C
94505*	6	16	\$147,384*	Excluded*
94597*	17	56	\$152,295*	Excluded*
94523*	33	112	\$165,684*	Excluded*

Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

Notes: All zip codes in the sample have a priority ranking of 1 for infant-toddler care, excluding zip codes with five or fewer sites. The three zip codes with the highest median family household income are excluded. We estimated the number of ECE workforce members using average staffing data from the 2023 Contra Costa ECE Workforce Study (Powell et al., 2024). Contracted centers are excluded. Specifically, we estimated 1.2 staff members per small license FCC provider, 1.7 staff members per large license FCC provider, and 8 staff members per center. Median household income of families was estimated using 2022 American Community Survey data (retrieved from Table S1901 at data.census.gov). Cluster A includes zip codes with a median family income below \$100,000; Cluster B includes zip codes with a median household income between \$100,000 and \$130,000; and Cluster C includes zip codes with a median household income between \$130,000 and \$145,000.

*The three zip codes in Priority 1 with the highest median household incomes are excluded from the pilot to prioritize communities with lower incomes.

⁵ There are approximately 108 centers in Priority 1 zip codes that do not hold a Head Start or Title 5 contract. To serve 60 educators in centers, Contra Costa would select between 8 and 15 centers, depending on the number of staff per site that applies. For family child care providers, it is likely that only a subset of applicants would have a paid staff member and thus would apply for themselves alone. To reach a total of 60 FCC educators and assistants, the number of participating FCC sites might be between 35 and 45.

Who Applies: Sites or Individuals?

ECE wage supplement programs in other areas sometimes ask individual educators to apply for the payments, while in other programs, the site leader applies on behalf of all their staff in roles that work directly with children. For centers in particular, this decision can have a big impact on the program. Having educators enroll means that they must each fill out an application to be deemed eligible, generating hundreds of applications to review. Pilots that have sites apply, meanwhile, simplify part of this process. Moreover, selecting sites allows Contra Costa County to have more options for evaluation: not only can they compare how individuals are impacted, but they can explore whether the whole site experiences better staffing and enrollment. Members of educator input sessions also supported selection by site.

Crucially, determining whether educators or sites apply does not mean that the pilot program would have to pass payments through the employers. Educators at selected sites could submit their banking information and be paid directly. That way, sites do not take on the responsibility for receiving and disbursing the funds.

A strong evaluation design would assign some eligible applicants to a control group during the lottery process (see **Control Group**, below). In this scenario, we recommend that priority zip codes be grouped in clusters (see **Table 1**, page 11) and a balanced number of participants be selected in each cluster (for instance, selecting three to five centers per cluster and 12 to 15 FCC sites per cluster).

Control Group

Many ECE wage supplement pilots serve all eligible applicants, but some examples include a control group. The Virginia Teacher Recognition Program implemented a lottery for applicants within Fairfax County, the most populous part of the state. In guaranteed income pilots, however, control groups are standard due to their importance for evaluation. For example, the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot has a control group where some eligible participants are intentionally not selected to receive payments. Instead, these participants are invited to join in data collection activities like surveys so that researchers can compare the experiences of pilot participants and nonparticipants. Contra Costa County may also consider alternative models to build a control group, like synthetic control groups, following the example of the Thriving Providers Project.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: A control group will help the county study the impact of payments through its evaluation plan. In this scenario, the county should create a control group of a size similar to the pilot group at minimum. However, because it may be harder to connect with nonparticipants via surveys or other evaluation activities and attrition is generally much higher in this group, we recommend having a control group that is at least 30-percent larger within each zip code cluster. That way, attrition or drop-off from the control group will not undermine the evaluation plan.

Payment Schema

Payment Frequency

In early care and education, ongoing wage supplement programs range in frequency from biweekly (Thriving Providers Project) to annual (North Carolina Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$). Guaranteed income pilots, meanwhile, are typically monthly (for instance, the Concord GI Pilot Program and the Advancing Fresno Guaranteed Income project). More frequent payments can help smooth out financial instability for house-

holds with low incomes (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2021). Payment frequency has implications for the cost of administering the program, however; monthly payments may be too expensive or challenging to implement.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: If possible, the pilot should provide a minimum of four payments per year (quarterly payment). The county should consider feasibility and administrative cost when making its determination among options such as biweekly, monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly pay.

Payment Range

The value of each payment varies across wage pilots, especially as payments have very different frequencies. To make it easier to compare programs, we calculated the annual total benefit for an individual enrolled in different pilots. In early care and education, annual payments vary from several thousand dollars to \$40,000. The District of Columbia's Pay Equity Fund provides up to \$14,000 per year, and the San Francisco CARES 3.0 program provides nearly \$40,000 per year in some cases.⁶

In each of these examples, payments fall within a preset range, where payments are often higher for early educators based on their job role and educational attainment. Equivalencies for experience in lieu of education are rare (see the San Francisco CARES 3.0 example). Instead, many programs are built as an extension of quality rating and improvement systems that reward educators who earn higher degrees and/or work in sites with higher rankings.

In the guaranteed income space, a \$6,000 total benefit per year is the most common amount, distributed in monthly payments of \$500. Both the Advancing Fresno Guaranteed Income Program and the Concord GI Pilot Program use this approach. A few programs are more generous, such as the BIG:LEAP initiative in Los Angeles, which provides twice as much per month for a total of \$12,000 per year. Payment amounts do not typically differ among program participants in the way that they do in ECE wage pilots.

Educators who participated in pilot focus groups with Clarity Social Research Group advocated for higher payments per person, with some suggesting \$12,000 or even \$18,000 per year would be the right amount to make a difference, considering the high cost of living in the Bay Area.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Contra Costa should offer a minimum payment of \$12,000 per year or more.

Payment Scale

As discussed in the previous section, quality rating and improvement systems dictate the specific payments to early educators in many wage pilots around the country—even those designed with a retention goal (such as Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N.). Contra Costa County is explicitly taking a different approach, where the payment schema does not push participants to take on additional student debt or seek jobs at centers with better ratings to access a higher wage. Contra Costa already has a thriving quality improvement program that engages hundreds of ECE providers on a voluntary basis each year. This program, called [Quality Matters](#), is co-led by First 5 Contra Costa and the Contra Costa County Office of Education, in partnership with CocoKids, the county's resource and referral agency.

⁶ In San Francisco, certain family child care providers are eligible for the annual benefit of \$39,100, but payments for other educators may be as low as \$4,000 per year.

Different payments determined by job role and part- or full-time status may be appropriate, however. Specifically, establishing a higher payment for family child care providers honors their broad scope of both instruction and program leadership, as well as their longer average work hours (CSCCE, 2022). The county could also explore reduced payments for educators who leave the pilot footprint but continue working in the field of early care and education.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: The county should adopt a simple schema with payment levels based on job role and full-time status (**Table 2**). It should be noted that this schema may put some center staff at or above their director’s salary.⁷ Also, the increases in payments between job roles are small in order to contain the total cost of the pilot.

Table 2. Sample Annualized Payment Schema

Job Role	Part-Time	Full-Time
Family child care educator (owner/operator)	N/A	\$14,000
Center teacher (lead or assistant) or FCC assistant	\$12,000	\$13,000

Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

Additional Payments

The pilot design excludes administrators who do not provide education and care directly to children. In the case of a site-based application, however, the county could provide a one-time payment to site leaders as an honorarium for applying on behalf of their staff. Contra Costa could also consider supporting some educators who are disenrolled from the program because of a job change. While the pilot aims to support retention, it will only cover part of the county (e.g., specific sites and zip codes). As such, the county could offer a reduced ongoing payment or a one-time exit payment to educators who change jobs but show that they still work in early care and education.

⁷ The Advisory Group discussed the possibility of a lead teacher earning more than a director during the pilot. We agreed, however, that the pilot’s limited timeline would not create a long-term imbalance in earnings.

IV. Pilot Implementation

In this section, we propose strategies for the pilot application, selection, and enrollment. We also discuss how Contra Costa should manage documentation and recordkeeping, payment processing, and administrative concerns.

Application

In early care and education, it is common practice to have either educators or their site leaders apply to participate in wage enhancement programs. For example, the Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program requires educators to apply by joining an applicant database operated by Child Care Aware of Minnesota, while in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Teacher Wage Increase Pilot, site leaders applied on behalf of their staff.⁸

In guaranteed income pilots, applications are also standard. In rare cases, such as Austin's Guaranteed Income Pilot Program, participants are instead nominated by partner organizations working in the community.

Participants in both the educator focus groups and the Advisory Group emphasized the importance of a well-promoted opportunity with clear, straightforward requirements.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Develop a simple application to determine eligibility. Consider using one of the entities or agencies that will be involved in ongoing data collection or payment processing as the starting point for the application. The simplest strategy would be to have sites apply on behalf of their staff. This application process would include providing a list of current employees who would be eligible to receive payments. Then, when a site is selected, each eligible staff member would receive a direct invitation to enroll and provide their banking information to the payment vendor. Educators would be allowed to opt out.

Contra Costa would use the pilot ramp-up phase (see **Timeline**) to process site applications, run a lottery to select sites, and then work with contractors to ensure all eligible employees who have not opted out become enrolled in the payment platform, as described in the following section.

Selection and Enrollment

In wage pilots where some applicants are selected and others are not, the standard procedure is to select a group of participants after closing the application. That way, the pilot implementers can randomly determine participation. It also avoids a first-come-first-serve approach, which could disadvantage applicants with a language barrier or technology challenge. Moreover, random assignment can also be used in the same step to create a control group, if applicable. Most often, pilots will use a lottery to choose applicants. In early care and education, examples of lottery selection include the Virginia Teacher Recognition Program and the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Teacher Wage Increase Pilot.

Guaranteed income pilots almost always use this approach, such as the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot and BIG:LEAP in Los Angeles. Pilots like the one in Chicago, however, do sometimes take certain criteria into account when processing the application: not only do they have income limits, but they also prioritize applicants who experienced economic hardship related to COVID-19.

⁸ Any lead or assistant teacher working at least 16 hours per week would receive the benefit unless they opted out.

After being selected, participants must enroll and verify their payment information (e.g., direct deposit, mailing address, and so forth). Some programs have dedicated funding for financial or benefits counselors during the enrollment process and beyond or provide additional services to those who are unbanked or underbanked. The pioneering Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) program is a good example: advisors were available to determine any negative impact the program might have on eligibility for benefits like CalFresh or Medi-Cal.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: The proposed pilot should hold a lottery at the end of the application window to select participating sites. Then, all eligible staff within those sites should be invited to enroll and confirm their payment information. When staff are notified, it is possible some will not respond or will choose to opt out. In that case, the county could consider randomly adding additional sites to reach the desired group size.

Navigating Benefit Cliffs at Enrollment

Early educators frequently use public assistance programs like CalFresh or Medi-Cal (Powell et al., 2024). While cash assistance makes pilot participants better off, some enrollees may worry about losing access to their benefits, which could occur if the pilot payments push their total household income over the assistance programs' income cap. Counseling aids educators in determining whether they might be impacted by a benefit cliff and helps them make an informed decision about joining the pilot. Contra Costa could consider requiring the payment contractor/vendor to offer benefits counseling or use additional funding sources to offer such services.

Documentation and Recordkeeping

The proposed pilot will require some documentation collection and verification. Examples from similar initiatives around the country suggest the county will need to verify employment details, likely through documents or contact with the participant's employer or via the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry. For example, the Maine Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement requires site leaders to verify the employment of all participating educators on a monthly basis by maintaining up-to-date rosters in the state's Workforce Registry. In San Francisco, CARES 3.0 recipients must also have their status verified by the Workforce Registry.

In some pilots, income verification requires applicants to provide a W2 form, pay stubs, or other proof of income eligibility. Additionally, to receive payment, applicants may also need to provide a W9 form and direct deposit forms. Florida's ARPA Stabilization Grants offer an example of such requirements. One GI pilot vendor, AidKit, has experimented with creative ways to verify eligibility, including attestations and proof of residency using images and passive location verification.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: The county should develop a system for gathering and verifying documents, likely through contractors who will take on responsibility for administering part of the pilot. This process will likely include repeat collection or reverification of some materials on an ongoing basis, particularly related to current employment status. The least-burdensome strategy for reverifying employment status would be to confirm the list of active staff at participating sites prior to each payment. This strategy would avoid burdening educators with individually confirming their employment.

A Note on Data Security and Privacy

Participants are entitled to the highest standard of data security and privacy. Every agency or contractor involved in stewarding the pilot should develop and adhere to a clear plan. Data sharing between partners—for instance, between county administering agencies and a payment vendor—should be limited to the specific purposes of administering the pilot and never include sensitive information.

In addition, Contra Costa should ensure that documents require as little information as possible. For instance, if social security numbers are not required to process payments, they should not be collected.

Contra Costa should consider partnering with the California ECE Workforce Registry, a resource and referral agency, or a payment vendor such as AidKit to conduct the document collection and verification. Other documentation or data may be collected through the evaluation process (see **Evaluation**, below, for more detail). This type of information should be kept confidential and separate from enrollment and application data.

Payment Processing

Payments to early educators typically take one of two forms: either they receive checks (via mail or direct deposit), or the payment is first routed to their employer and then paid to the recipient. San Francisco’s CARES 3.0 initiative follows the first format, while the Early Educator Salary Support Grant follows the second. Guaranteed income pilots, meanwhile, are designed to be more flexible and sometimes involve a third path: partnering with a company to disburse funds on a prepaid debit card that can be mailed or picked up at a trusted location. For example, the seminal guaranteed income pilot Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) included a city partnership with a nonprofit called Community Financial Resources to issue debit cards.

Countering Fraud

Cash assistance programs are always at some degree of risk of fraudulent applications. Bad actors can flood application systems, and in extreme cases, they may outpace genuine applications ten to one.⁹ Mitigating this risk requires careful planning and monitoring at each phase, beginning with the screening of applications. Many pilot programs across the county have created tools and processes that have successfully minimized this risk. It is important to note that reviewing and screening applications and other submitted documents to monitor for fraud is an administrative expense for any program of this nature.

When it comes to distributing payments, Contra Costa can reduce fraud by not issuing checks through the mail. AidKit, an experienced implementation partner in guaranteed income pilots, supports recipients in accessing payments via direct deposit or debit cards only. Debit cards may be mailed, but they can also be issued virtually.

⁹ AidKit GI payment facilitators described this issue.

When sites bear the responsibility for applying and enrolling their staff, they sometimes also receive a smaller general grant or payment in exchange. The Idaho Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant, for instance, provided sites with an administrative grant equivalent to an additional 10 percent of the wage enhancement.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: The county should consider the preferences of providers in selecting the mode of payment. The county must also adopt a method that will allow for efficient and secure payments. Evaluating specific proposals via a Request for Qualifications may be a helpful way to compare options for implementation. Paying site leaders to disburse funds, however, not only may increase costs, but also require ongoing technical assistance and auditing. Paying educators directly avoids burdening site leaders.

Administrative Considerations

Supporting Participants Beyond Cash

In the earlier section on **Selection and Enrollment**, we recommended providing benefits counseling to participants as they make their decision to enroll. Pilots sometimes provide auxiliary services on an ongoing basis. In early care and education, the Thriving Providers Project incorporates mental health and peer support in structured workshops. Meanwhile, GI pilots like the Abundant Birth Project support participants by connecting them to social safety net programs. However, because GI pilots are unconditional, they avoid requiring participants to engage with auxiliary services.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Contra Costa may choose to follow the GI model and offer to connect participants with existing support networks. This support could include facilitating access to social safety net enrollment or professional resources. However, the county should not mandate participation in auxiliary activities.

Staffing at the Administering Agency

Implementation will require staffing and resources across numerous entities: within the administering agency, as well as with an array of contractors who may contribute to: a) the application and verifying documents; b) ongoing reverification of employment; c) payment; and d) evaluation.

The Maine Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement, for instance, maintains a position dedicated almost exclusively to stewarding the program. Among other tasks, this person verifies eligibility, reconciles application data with registry data, and supports the payment process. Additionally, Maine draws on other staff at key points in the process: for instance, analysts generate reports, pass Registry data, and so forth. In Maine, however, payments go out monthly, and moreover, they do not contract out for their application or payment functions. By contrast, the San Francisco CARES 3.0 stipend is one of several duties performed by an analyst at the city's Department of Early Childhood. Payments are biannual instead of monthly, and applications as well as payments are handled by contractors (the Workforce Registry handles applications, and Children's Council issues payments).¹⁰

¹⁰ Administrative details were gathered in interviews with program staff from Maine and San Francisco.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: Contra Costa should determine which tasks can feasibly and reasonably be performed by contractors. The county must further develop a clear plan for how to collaborate with multiple partners while maintaining both efficiency and data/payment security. Finally, Contra Costa should consider if existing staff can perform any of the project-related functions, or whether the pilot will require new internal capacity (for instance, a Wage Supplement Program Manager). Processing payments more frequently will increase the amount of staff time required.

V. Evaluation

In this section, we discuss how an evaluation plan can be embedded in the proposed pilot. Researchers have already begun to document the role of wage supplements in educator well-being and retention (Schochet, 2023). As such, Contra Costa's pilot need not prove that increasing compensation can produce a positive effect; instead, efforts can focus on establishing a baseline for a local model and motivating future investments in ECE wages.

Contra Costa should consider the pilot with a dual purpose in mind: to support the economic well-being of the ECE workforce and to stabilize the programs where they work. Ultimately, a better supported and more stable workforce and network for programs would improve the availability and quality of care. These downstream effects, however, may not be feasible to measure within the context of a pilot: time and expense are prohibitive, and the county can draw on existing research to justify long-term benefits to stakeholders.

Research Questions

We can build from the pilot purpose and design to frame research questions, which should, in turn, guide the selection of metrics and methods. Research questions include the following areas.

Individual Level

- What do we observe about the economic well-being of the participants?
 - Were applicants impacted by a benefit cliff or tax bracket change?
- How do participants describe self-reported support, stress, and high-quality practices in their classroom?
- What do we observe about educators' intention to continue working in early care and education?

Site Level

- How do staffing and turnover rates compare between participating and nonparticipating sites?
- For FCC providers, what do we observe about their program's economic stability?

Implementation Concerns

- What staffing, partnerships, and systems are needed to run the pilot?
- What were the barriers to implementation? What were the barriers for individuals to participate?
- What lessons can we draw to inform a countywide or statewide version of the program?

Metrics

While the long-term purpose of the pilot is to have a system-level impact, the pilot does not cover the whole county. As such, metrics should focus on individual and site-level metrics. Contra Costa should confirm the specific metrics and methods in partnership with the evaluation contractor hired for the pilot or with the input of an ongoing advisory body, if evaluation activities will be internal to the administering agency.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: At the individual level, the pilot should include measures of economic well-being, such as food security, rent burden, and access to other public benefits (including checking for disenrollment). Metrics regarding the participant’s experience with the wage supplement program would also be valuable. Related measures of well-being (such as job-related stress) could complement the metrics related to economic well-being. Finally, tracking the individual’s employment status and job changes will be necessary to understand retention over time for participants in this program.

At the site level, the pilot should, at minimum, measure staffing and enrollment levels in order to detect any improvements to retention, program stability, and the ability to fully staff a child care operation. Survey questions are useful in generating quantitative data of this nature. Metrics could also look at other operational indicators of financial stability, which may be both quantitative (survey-based) and qualitative (survey, focus group, or interview) in nature. Family child care provider measures could include paying off debts, take-up of health insurance or retirement benefits, and related indicators. For centers, however, site-level metrics should be included only if the application process runs by site. Once again, survey measures may be appropriate here, but qualitative approaches can also provide compelling evidence.

It is inadvisable to draw on system-level data, such as licensed capacity, given the limited reach and duration of the pilot. Moreover, the impact of the wage supplement on observed teacher practice is both infeasible and incompatible with the pilot’s design. However, qualitative inquiry aimed at self-reported teacher practice could effectively highlight some of the pilot program’s impact that may be challenging to assess with a survey.

Data Collection

Evaluation designs often include surveys, focus groups, and secondary data analyses. Data may also need to come from multiple groups: at minimum, early educators in the pilot and control groups, as well as some center directors, will be included in data collection. Implementation metrics may require gathering data from additional sources. The strategy for data collection should flow from the specific research questions and metrics.

Recommendation for Contra Costa County: A mixed-methods approach could help Contra Costa explore the array of metrics described above. For instance, early educator well-being could be measured through a combination of surveys and focus groups or interviews. The latter options would also be appropriate for exploring the rollout and implementation challenges of the pilot. Gathering data in a “pre/post” approach could support the administering agency in measuring improvements, which could be further strengthened by comparison to a control group (including a synthetic control). In this approach, data collection might take place in the on-ramp and off-ramp phases of the pilot.

Staffing and enrollment levels by site would also benefit from a survey approach, though analysis of administrative data may also be available. Secondary data analysis of administrative data should include evaluating the data generated by the payments themselves, as well as eligibility verification processes and application processes. This approach would allow the evaluator to examine the relationship between the payments and the well-being data collected separately.

VI. Budget

Using the payment levels provided earlier in **Table 2**, the pilot budget would require an investment of \$2.9 million, based on the criteria described in the previous sections and an 18-month payment window (see **Table 3**). The budget is highly sensitive to cost drivers and assumptions. Refer to the *Budget Model* spreadsheet for more information and scenario development.

Table 3. Budget Model Baseline Scenario

	Fiscal Year 1	Fiscal Year 2	Total
Participant payments	\$1,085,925	\$1,085,925	\$2,171,850
Evaluation incentives	\$12,800	\$16,550	\$29,350
Contractors	\$396,818	\$332,532	\$729,350
Total	\$1,495,543	\$1,435,007	\$2,930,550
<i>Payments as a share of the budget</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>74%</i>

Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

Note: This scenario considers a three-month study ramp-up/enrollment, 18 months of payments, and a three-month off-ramp.

Model Cost Drivers

The accompanying *Budget Model* includes an array of cost drivers that can be manipulated for modeling scenarios.

Duration

- Length of ramp-up phase
- Length of payment implementation phase
- Length of off-ramp phase
- Payment frequency

Pilot Participants

- Enrollment by job role
- Benefit amount
- Survey and focus group size
- Survey and focus group incentives

Control Group

- Control group size
- Control group survey incentives

Evaluation

- Methods (including the number of surveys, focus groups, interviews)
- Frequency of data collection

Contractors

- Evaluation
- Enrollment and eligibility verification
- Payment processing

The budget model allows for miscellaneous costs such as referral bonuses, but the estimate presented in **Table 3** does not include this type of expense. It also does not include any staffing or indirect costs for the administering agency, which may be funded separately.

Assumptions

Impact of payment frequency: The model assumes the cost of administering payments scales up or down with their frequency. For instance, the model includes a baseline assumption of monthly payments. Increasing to biweekly payments scales up the cost, and decreasing to bimonthly or quarterly scales down the cost. These assumptions are intended to inform the development of a payment plan; however, Contra Costa will need to make its determination based on the proposals of actual vendors through a competitive bidding process.

Full-time workforce: Some members of the ECE workforce hold part-time positions. The model assumes, however, that 90 percent of pilot participants will be full-time employees, except for FCC providers (who are all assumed to be the equivalent of full-time).

Pilot retention: The total cost of payments would be reduced if providers leave their jobs at participating programs. The budget model assumes 90 percent of center teachers and FCC providers remain in the pilot, along with 70 percent of center and FCC assistants. The model calculates the savings for exiting pilot participants and deducts approximately one half of the savings, leaving a buffer in place.

Evaluator cost: External evaluator costs will depend on the scope of data collection and analysis. The budget model assumes that running more surveys and focus groups will increase the cost, with a range of \$180,000 to \$250,000 before the cost of incentives. As with other vendors, the final evaluation cost and scope within the budget will be determined via a competitive bidding process.

VII. Conclusion

This report offers a blueprint for a possible and much-needed early educator wage supplement. The ECE workforce faces profound economic insecurity, yet their deep passion drives them to continue working in the field. For too long, California has taken this passion for granted. As a result, turnover among early educators has persisted through economic booms and busts, and the COVID-19 pandemic made shortages worse. ECE jobs contracted sharply, only recently recovering, but this recovery has merely returned the county to its usual level of shortages (Powell et al., 2024).

Early educators are not the only ones who pay the price for policy inaction: children and families who depend upon their services are affected, as well. Throughout the state, licensed settings can accommodate only one third of young children with all parents working (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 2023). Two thirds of families do not have the option to enroll in a licensed ECE setting.

Early educator wage supplements are a cutting-edge policy solution to early educator shortages. By considering a pilot, Contra Costa can join other leaders around the country who are taking action to support the early care and education workforce.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Pilots Referenced in This Report

Table A1.1. ECE Wage Supplement Pilots

Name	Target Population(s)	Pilot Design
Virginia Teacher Recognition Program	Child care providers working with children from birth to age five who work at the same site for the whole school year are eligible. Sites must also be funded by the federal Preschool Development Birth Through Five Grant.	Launched in 2019 with a lottery in Fairfax County to select sites; other counties served all eligible applicants. Unselected sites participated in the evaluation as a control group. Early educators receive up to \$1,500 once per year.
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Teacher Wage Increase Pilot	Sites that meet a minimum quality rating and serve subsidized enrollments apply on behalf of their staff.	Launched in 2023 with a lottery to select one third of applicants; also created a control group. Sites received funding to increase salaries for all eligible staff between \$3.00 and \$7.60 per hour, depending on criteria such as region and job role.
ExceleRate Illinois Pilot	A small group of 34 programs were selected to receive salary increases for eligible staff as well as funding for protected teacher planning time. Programs were part of Illinois' quality rating system, ExceleRate, and serve subsidized enrollments.	This pilot goes back to 2021. Sites receive funding to boost wages between \$3.00 and \$7.00 per hour, depending on staff qualifications and job role.
Thriving Providers Project	Home-based early educators recruited through organizations with strong relationships in participating communities.	The inaugural cohort launched in Colorado in 2022. Participants receive \$500 per month for 18 months, plus mental health support, peer support, and financial coaching.
New Mexico Pre-K Parity Program	Early educators who hold a bachelor's degree and meet certain requirements can participate in the pay parity program.	The program launched in 2021 and continues to develop. As of 2023, the initiative boosts early educator wages to a minimum annual salary of \$50,000, with monthly payments.
Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N.	Early educators who meet educational requirements and remain in the same position for a full year are eligible.	The program began in 2003. Educators receive between \$500 to \$3,500 in an annual bonus.
Maine Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement System	Early educators in direct care roles who are active in the Maine Roads to Quality Registry at level one or higher can participate.	The first phase of the program was launched using ARPA dollars. The ongoing program now provides between \$275 and \$625 per month, depending on the educator's quality level in the Workforce Registry.
Washington, D.C., Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund	Child care sites apply on behalf of their staff and then receive funds to pay eligible staff based on educational attainment.	The program launched in 2022 to provide annual payments between \$10,000 and \$14,000 directly to educators. As of 2024, the District of Columbia has shifted to a salary scale model with payments funneled into educators' earnings.
San Francisco CARES 3.0	Providers who work in city-funded child care programs are eligible to apply. Their payment depends on a combination of their educational attainment and experience in ECE.	The initiative built on previous stipend programs (CARES and CARES 2.0). As of 2024, the program distributes payments between \$4,000 and \$39,100 per year in two installments.

Name	Target Population(s)	Pilot Design
North Carolina Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®	Infant-toddler teachers and providers who meet certain work and education requirements can participate.	The program began in 2018 but expanded in 2023. As of 2024, the annual payment ranges from \$600 to \$4,000, depending on eligibility criteria.
Rhode Island Early Educator Pandemic Retention Bonus Program	Early educators in direct care roles who remain employed in the same program are eligible.	This temporary program used pandemic relief funding from 2021 to 2024. In the 2023-2024 year, early educators can receive up to four quarterly bonuses of \$750.
Idaho Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant	Child care providers in direct care roles who meet certain basic work requirements can receive monthly payments.	This temporary program used pandemic relief funding from 2021 to 2022. Participants received \$300 per month, and sites received \$30 per person per month to administer the payments.

Table A1.2. Guaranteed Income Pilots (Non-ECE)

Name	Target Population(s)	Pilot Design
Abundant Birth Project	Supports Black and Pacific Islander pregnant and postpartum people to reduce the prevalence of preterm births and improve economic outcomes.	In San Francisco, ABP provided \$1,000 per month to nearly 150 pregnant and postpartum people. ABP later expanded to more counties.
Advancing Fresno Guaranteed Income Program	Households with children age five and younger in southwest Fresno and Huron, areas with concentrated poverty.	Offered a monthly supplement of \$500 for 12 months to 150 households.
Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot Program	Community-based organizations already working in the community recommended families in their networks.	Provided \$1,000 per month for 12 months to 173 households.
Baby's First Years	Mothers with young children living in low-income households in New York City, greater New Orleans, the Twin Cities, and the Omaha metropolitan area.	One thousand mothers receive a monthly payment of either \$333/month or \$20/month for the first 52 months of their child's life, starting at birth.
BIG:LEAP	Parents who are living in poverty and/or who have experienced economic hardship due to COVID-19.	Provided 3,200 individuals with \$1,000 per month for 12 months.
Concord Guaranteed Income Pilot Program	Prioritized families with children age 12 or younger living in neighborhoods that fit certain economic criteria.	Provided \$500 per month over 12 months to 120 households.
Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot	People who are living in poverty and who have experienced economic hardship due to COVID-19.	Provided \$500 per month for 12 months to 5,000 individuals.
Los Angeles County Breathe	Individuals who are living in poverty and/or who have experienced economic hardship due to COVID-19; a later round focused on foster youth.	As part of Los Angeles County's Poverty Alleviation Initiative, 1,000 participants received \$1,000 per month for 36 months.
Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED)	People living in a Stockton neighborhood where the median income falls at or below \$46,033 (2019).	Launch phase in 2019 provided 125 individuals with \$500 per month for 18 months.

Appendix 2. Priority Zip Codes for the Contra Costa Pilot

The 2022 Contra Costa County Needs Assessment lists 17 zip codes as Priority 1 for infant-toddler unmet need (Contra Costa County Local Planning & Advisory Council, 2022). **Table A2.1** shows the zip codes by priority level, as well as an estimate of the number of providers who work in family child care homes and non-contracted child care centers. We excluded some zip codes in Priorities 2 and 3 with fewer than five sites. We estimated the number of ECE workforce members using average staffing data from the 2023 Contra Costa ECE Workforce Study: 1.2 staff members per small FCC program license, 1.7 per large FCC program license, and 8 per center (Powell et al., 2024). Families' household income was estimated using 2022 American Community Survey data (retrieved from Table S1901 at data.census.gov). The median family household income in Contra Costa County was \$139,078 in 2022.

Table A2.1. Zip Code Ranking, Providers, and Income

Contra Costa County

ZIP Code	Infant-Toddler Priority (2022)	Estimated FCC Providers and Assistants (2023)	Estimated Center Teachers and Assistants (2023)	Median Household Income of Families (2022)
94804	1	70	24	\$84,616
94509	1	77	48	\$85,625
94520	1	31	48	\$86,035
94806	1	67	48	\$88,209
94565	1	105	80	\$95,927
94803	1	33	40	\$125,190
94531	1	102	24	\$127,420
94561	1	64	32	\$128,383
94518	1	44	48	\$128,750
94519	1	13	64	\$129,885
94521	1	41	104	\$139,586
94547	1	29	0	\$140,214
94553	1	28	72	\$142,485
94530	1	42	48	\$143,257
94505	1*	6	16	\$147,384
94597	1*	17	56	\$152,295
94523	1*	33	112	\$165,684
94572	2	8	16	\$101,058
94805	2	15	16	\$117,161
94564	2	25	24	\$126,563
94513	2	68	120	\$145,371
94517	2	7	32	\$179,198
94583	2	53	80	\$203,624
94582	2	23	40	\$244,306

ZIP Code	Infant-Toddler Priority (2022)	Estimated FCC Providers and Assistants (2023)	Estimated Center Teachers and Assistants (2023)	Median Household Income of Families (2022)
94801	3	22	16	\$77,232
94595	3	8	40	\$150,136
94596	3	7	48	\$154,919
94598	3	17	64	\$226,138
94526	3	2	104	\$235,780
94556	3	4	48	\$245,556
94506	3	6	24	\$250,000+
94507	3	3	40	\$250,000+
94549	3	9	88	\$250,000+
94563	3	2	40	\$250,000+

Notes: 2022 priority zip codes are reported to the California Department of Social Services, per the local planning council's needs assessment (Contra Costa County Local Planning & Advisory Council, 2022). The table excluded zip codes with fewer than five sites. We estimated the number of ECE workforce members using average staffing data from the 2023 Contra Costa ECE Workforce Study (Powell et al., 2024). Contracted centers were excluded. Specifically, we estimated 1.2 staff members per small FCC program, 1.7 per large FCC program, and 8 per center. Families' median household income was estimated using 2022 American Community Survey data (retrieved from Table S1901 at data.census.gov).

*The three zip codes in Priority 1 with the highest median household incomes will be excluded from the pilot.

Table A2.2. Noncontractor Centers in Priority Zip Codes

Cluster A

94509

Cornerstone Children's Center	2800 Sunset Lane	Antioch
Hilltop Christian Preschool	2200 Country Hills Drive	Antioch
Holy Rosary School PreK	25 East 15th Street	Antioch
Imagination Academy	2032 Hillcrest Drive	Antioch
Kindercare - Mahogany	2300 Mahogany Way	Antioch
La Petite Academy - Antioch	1350 East Tregallas Road	Antioch

94520

Bay Christian Preschool	4725 Evora Road	Concord
Beginnings & Beyond Montessori	1965 Colfax Street	Concord
Bright Stars Children's Center Inc.	1581 Meadow Lane	Concord
New Hope Academy Preschool	2120 Olivera Court	Concord
Queen of All Saints	2391 Grant Street	Concord
Sunshine House - Concord	3585 Port Chicago Hwy	Concord

94565

Dianne Adair Enrichment - Delta View	2916 Rio Verde	Pittsburg
Kindercare - Pittsburg	150 E Leland Road	Pittsburg
Light the Bay Preschool	1210 Stoneman Avenue	Pittsburg
Los Medanos College Child Study Ctr	2700 East Leland Road	Pittsburg
New Destiny Inc.	1411 East Leland Road	Pittsburg

Railroad Junction School	2224 Railroad Avenue	Pittsburg
St. Peter Martyr Preschool	425 West 4th Street	Pittsburg
Kids First Academy	2430 Willow Pass Road	Bay Point
Sunny Brook Learning Center	3255 Willow Pass Road	Bay Point
The Lil' Genius Kid	33 Ambrose Avenue	Bay Point

94804

Curious Explorers Academy	200 Broadway	Richmond
Nomura Preschool	5511 Burlingame Avenue	Richmond
Nomura School	1711 Carlson Boulevard	Richmond

94806

Contra Costa College Lab School	2600 Mission Bell Drive	San Pablo
Happy Lion Day Care Center	2929 Castro Road	San Pablo
Kindercare - San Pablo	3240 San Pablo Dam Road	San Pablo
Sonja's Preschool & Child Care Center	2300 El Portal Drive, Suite A	San Pablo
La Petite Academy (Lakeside)	3891 Lakeside Drive	Richmond
Supreme Kids Academy	3065 Richmond Parkway	Richmond

Cluster B

94518

Dianne Adair Enrichment - El Monte	1400 Dina Drive	Concord
La Petite Academy - Concord	4304 Cowell Road	Concord
My Second Home	1011 Oak Grove Road	Concord
Super Kidz Club	2140 Minert Road	Concord
The Concordia School	2353 Fifth Avenue	Concord
Wood Rose Academy	4347 Cowell Road	Concord

94519

A White Dove School	1850 2nd Street	Concord
Bright Stars Learning Center	3036 Clayton Road	Concord
Calvary Christian Preschool	3425 Concord Blvd	Concord
Dianne Adair - Monte Gardens	3841 Larkspur Drive	Concord
First Lutheran Preschool	4006 Concord Blvd	Concord
Joyful Kids Academy	2898 Concord Blvd	Concord
Montessori School of Concord	3039 Willow Pass Road	Concord
St. Michael's Episcopal Day Preschool	2925 Bonifacio Street	Concord

94531

Kindercare - Folsom	4308 Folsom Drive	Antioch
Kindercare - Lone Tree	4108 Lone Tree Way	Antioch
The Learning Experience	4831 Lone Tree Way	Antioch

94561

A Child's Place Preschool & Daycare	3405 Main Street	Oakley
Bright Beginnings	132 O'Hara Avenue	Oakley
Kiddie Academy (Oakley)	1620 Neroly Road	Oakley
Sunshine House - Oakley	875 W Cypress Road	Oakley

94803

Hope Childcare Center & Preschool	2830 May Road	El Sobrante
Kids Corner Learning Center	716 Appian Way	El Sobrante
Sunshine Playschool	5151 Argyle Road	El Sobrante
Patty's Montessori School	801 Park Central Street	Richmond
Step By Step Preschool, Inc	3500 El Portal Drive	Richmond

Cluster C**94521**

Angels Montessori	1566 Bailey Road	Concord
Building Kidz School (S3M)	5100 Clayton Road	Concord
Clayton Valley Parent Preschool	1645 West Street	Concord
Dianne Adair Enrichment - Highlands	1326 Pennsylvania Blvd	Concord
Dianne Adair Enrichment - Westwood	1748 West Street	Concord
Happy Little Faces	1470 Wharton Way	Concord
KinderCare - Concord	1551 Bailey Road	Concord
King's Valley Christian School	4255 Clayton Road	Concord
Myrtle Farm Montessori	4976 Myrtle Drive	Concord
Step By Step Montessori School 2	4991 Clayton Road	Concord
Step By Step Montessori School Inc.	1507 Heather Drive	Concord
Walnut Country Preschool	4465 So. Larwin Avenue	Concord
We Care Children's Center	2191 Kirker Pass Road	Concord

94530

El Cerrito Preschool Co-Op	7200 Moeser Lane	El Cerrito
Golestan	320 San Carlos Avenue	El Cerrito
Keystone Montessori School	6639 Blake Street	El Cerrito
Little Tree Montessori	2603 Tassajara Avenue	El Cerrito
Pride and Joy Preschool	1226 Liberty Street	El Cerrito
Sycamore Christian Preschool	1111 Navellier Street	El Cerrito

94553

Childtime Children's Center	6635 Alhambra Avenue	Martinez
Creekside Montessori	1333 Estudillo Street	Martinez
Forest Hills Midhill	127 Midhill Road	Martinez
Forest Hills Preschool	5834 Alhambra Avenue	Martinez
Helping Hands Christian Preschool	5050 Hiller Lane	Martinez
KinderCare - Martinez	1285 Morello Avenue	Martinez
Morello Hills Christian Preschool	1000 Morello Hills Drive	Martinez
St. Catherine's Preschool	1125 Ferry Street	Martinez
Sunshine House - Martinez	4950 Pacheco Blvd	Martinez

Location Data: CocoKids

Note: We do not name the family child care educators by zip code for privacy reasons. Head Start/Title 5 contractor programs are also excluded from the list.