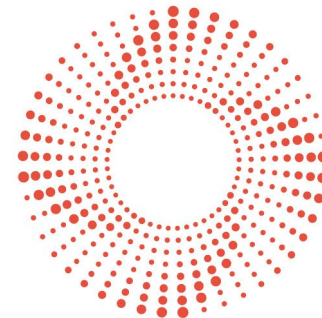


Early Childhood Education Workforce in Alaska: Preliminary Findings

Presentation to the Child Care Task Force
November 7th, 2023



Stellar Group
Research | Strategy | Impact

Outline of presentation

- » Review of methods
- » Presentation of key findings
- » Examples from other states



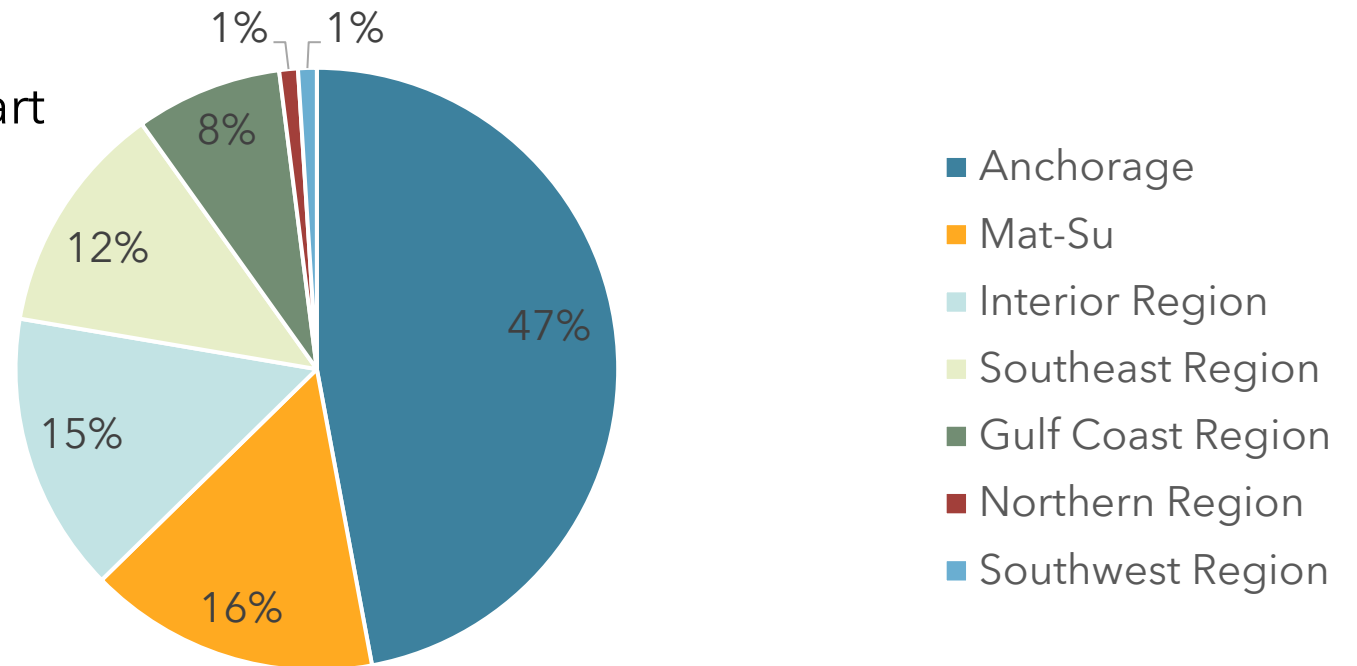
Research Methods

- » Survey of 699 early childhood educators throughout Alaska
- » 23 Interviews + 2 focus groups with early childhood educators and administrators
- » 13 Interviews with leaders and program managers in other states
- » 11 Interviews with educational and professional development key informants
- » Literature review
- » Secondary data collection
 - » Reports from national early childhood think tanks
 - » Alaska Child Care Program Office (CCPO)
 - » Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD)
 - » SEED data
 - » Council for Professional Recognition
 - » 2023 ROOTS Award Evaluation



Survey Demographics

- » 93% female (N=699)
- » 83% still in ECE workforce /17% recently left
- » Type of program
 - » 52% centers
 - » 25% Head Start/Early Head Start
 - » 9% homes or group homes
 - » 4% pre-k (school district)



N=522 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce, 2023.)



Objective 11: The early childhood workforce is stable, qualified, compensated, diverse, and supported.

11.1: Increase cross sector recruitment and retention of early childhood professionals.

11.2: Increase professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals.

11.3: Improve wages and compensation for early childhood professionals.

11.4: Increase diversity across the early childhood workforce.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ALASKA

A Strategic Direction for 2020-2025

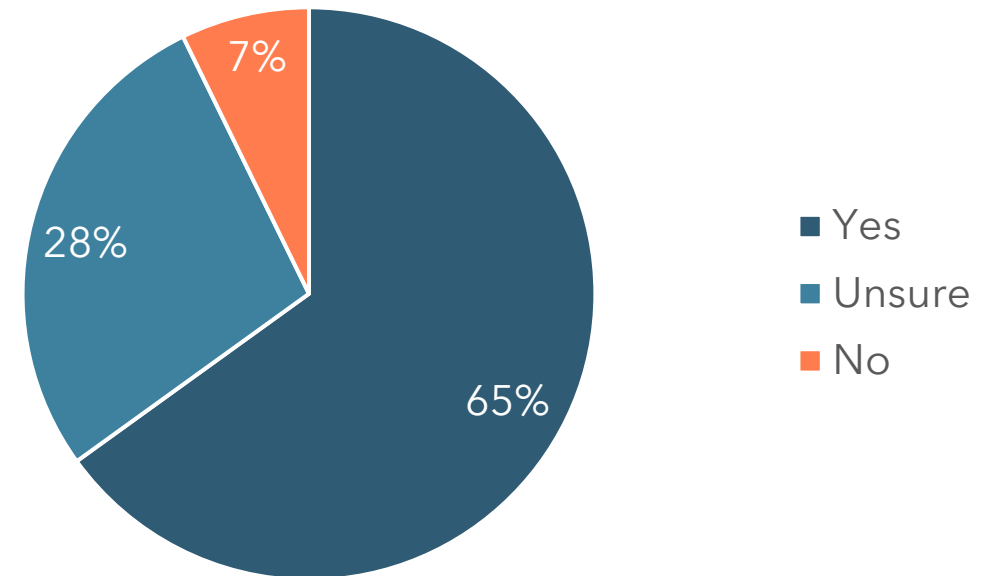
JUNE 2020



The early childhood workforce is passionate and hardworking

- » **100%** said they enjoy being early childhood educators
- » Most EC educators enter the workforce with the intention to stay.
- » **Nearly 2/3 intend to stay in the field, with another 28% considering it.** Only 7% plan to move on from the field.
- » Yet...

Only 7% of EC educators did not see early childhood education as a long term career path



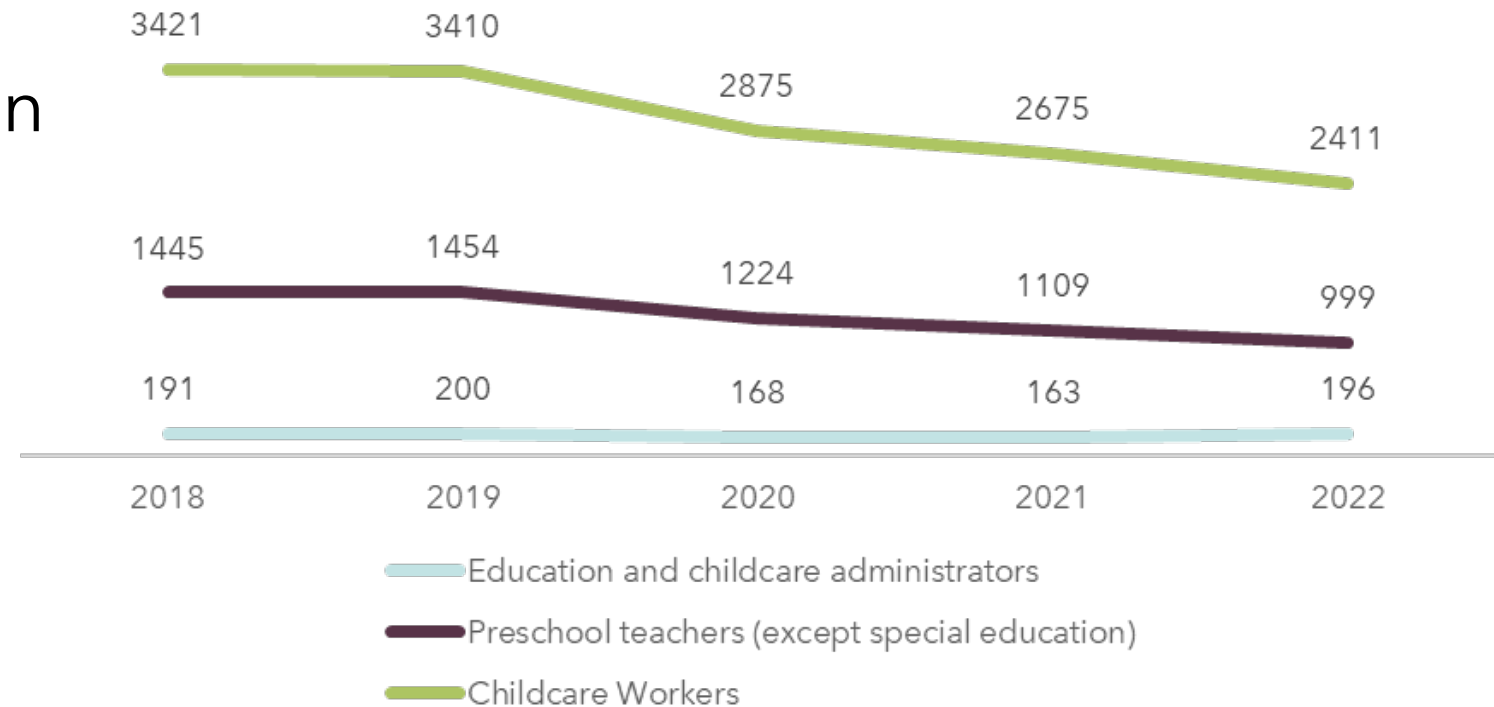
N=455 Survey of early childhood education workforce. 2023.)

Yet, the workforce is steadily declining

- » **49% turnover rate**
- » **30% overall decline** in childcare workers and preschool teachers

“Because of the high turnover with staffing, we haven’t even been able to open again. So we are now a village without childcare.”

Workforce numbers from 2018 to 2022

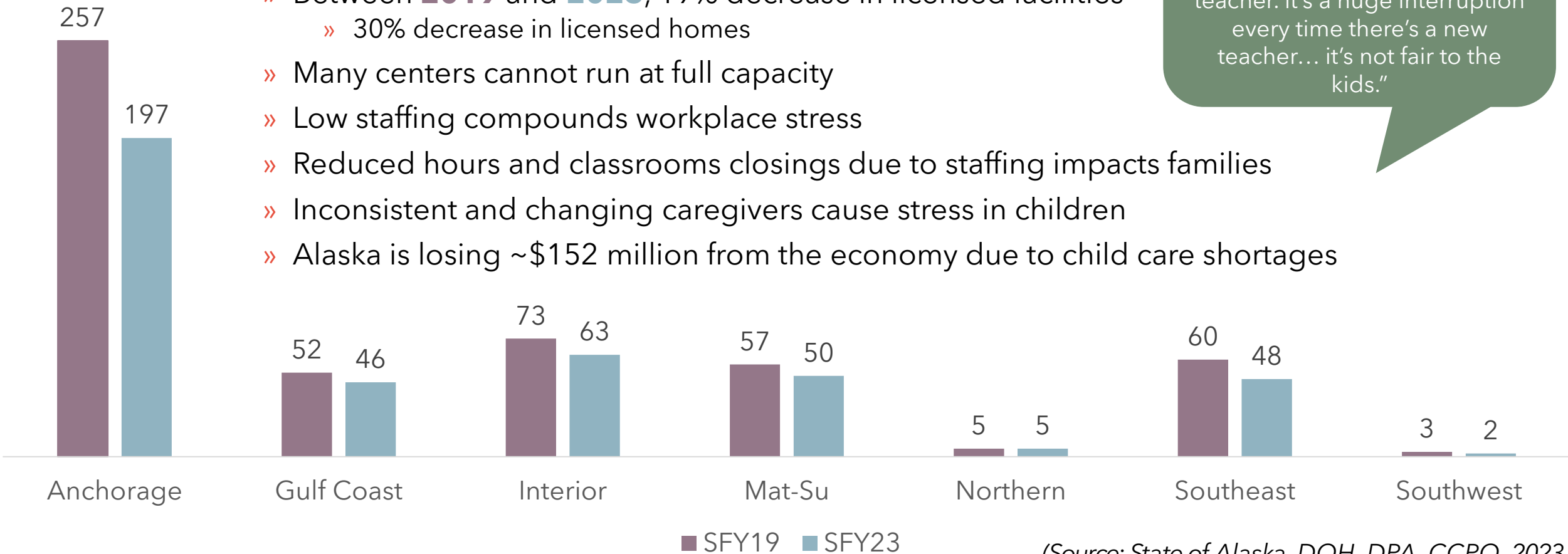


(Source: State of Alaska DOLWD, 2023.)

High turnover and overall decline has devastating effects

"If the turnover rate is extremely high at the preschool, then that doesn't give kids a chance to build a relationship with a teacher. It's a huge interruption every time there's a new teacher... it's not fair to the kids."

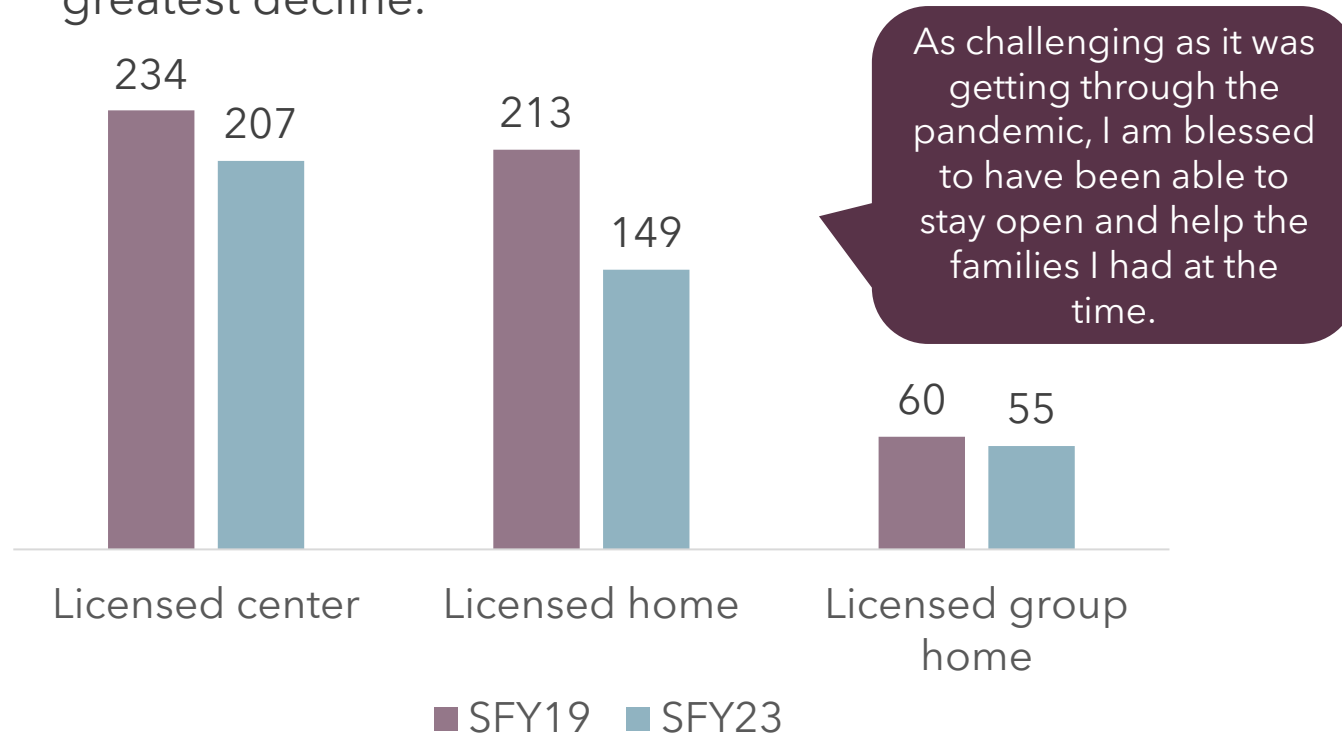
- » Between **2019** and **2023**, 19% decrease in licensed facilities
 - » 30% decrease in licensed homes
- » Many centers cannot run at full capacity
- » Low staffing compounds workplace stress
- » Reduced hours and classrooms closings due to staffing impacts families
- » Inconsistent and changing caregivers cause stress in children
- » Alaska is losing ~\$152 million from the economy due to child care shortages



(Source: State of Alaska, DOH, DPA, CCPO. 2023.)

Factors Impacting the Crisis: In-home care providers

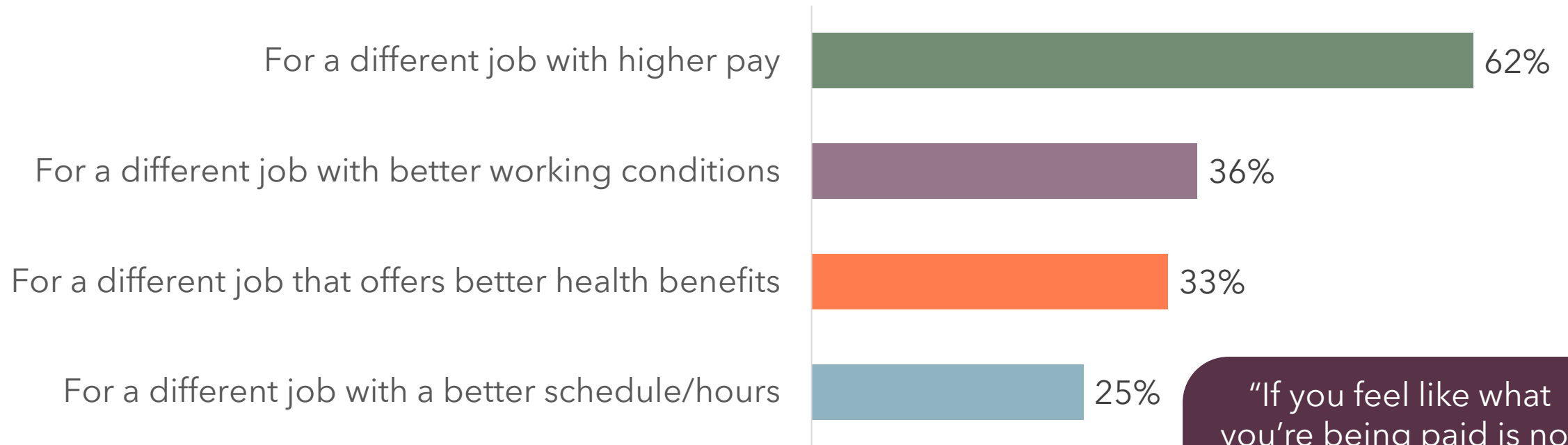
There are fewer of every type of licensed facility; however, in-home facilities have seen the greatest decline.



- » Licensing challenges
- » Lower payment rates for child care assistance
- » Loss of security as post-pandemic relief funds go away

"During the actual Covid outbreak, there were lots of resources and monetary incentives for child care workers. Now that the Covid money has been used up or is no longer available, that sense of safety and security is now gone. Even our USDA food money has been cut by 2/3."

Why do early childhood educators consider leaving the field?



"If you feel like what you're being paid is not enough to go through the hard parts of your day, you're going to stop doing it."

Factors Impacting the Crisis: Wages

MEDIAN WAGES AND LIVING WAGE IN ALASKA	
	Wage
Childcare workers	\$15.14
Preschool workers	\$17.09
Living wage with 0 children	\$17.15
Living wage with 1 child	\$35.46
Living wage with 2 children	\$45.56
Living wage with 3 children	\$60.65

Median wage for childcare worker and preschool teachers is below the living wage in Alaska for a single adult without children and *less than half* the living wage for an adult with one child.

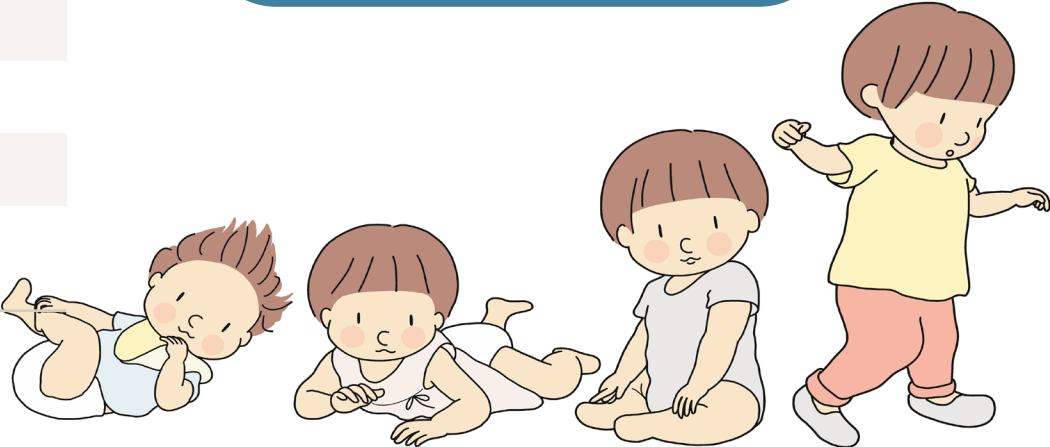
"I have an M.Ed. And [a teaching certificate] and I only get paid \$15/hour. It is disheartening considering that minimum wage workers at fast food restaurants get paid as much."

(Source: DOLWD wage data and Glasmeier, Amy K. Living Wage Calculator. 2023. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Living Wage Calculation for Alaska, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/02>.)

Early childhood educators make less than other jobs that require similar levels of education and that have similar levels of responsibility.

2022 WAGE COMPARISONS	
Occupation	2022 Median Wage
Childcare workers	\$15.14
Preschool teachers	\$17.09
Home health and personal care aides	\$17.24
Office clerks	\$22.26
Community health workers	\$24.81
Elementary school teachers	\$32.01
Secondary school teachers	\$38.90

"I'll be honest, motivation has been lacking because of pay... I get paid less than I did when I was a gardener in college."

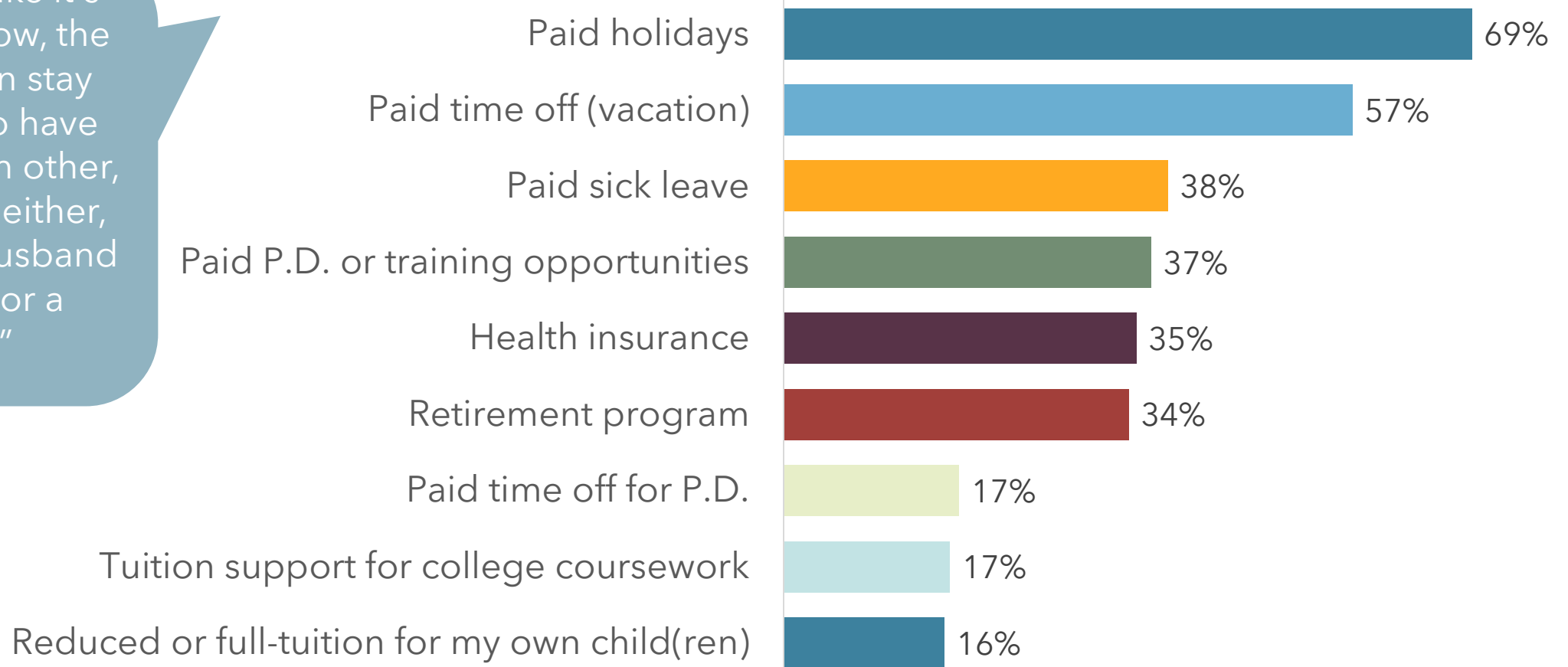


(Source: DOLWD wage data. 2023.)

Factors Impacting the Crisis: Benefits

"...it seems like it's really, you know, the folks who can stay are ones who have insurance from other, other places, either, you know, a husband or parents or a spouse."

Current benefits (full-time, part-time, and other)

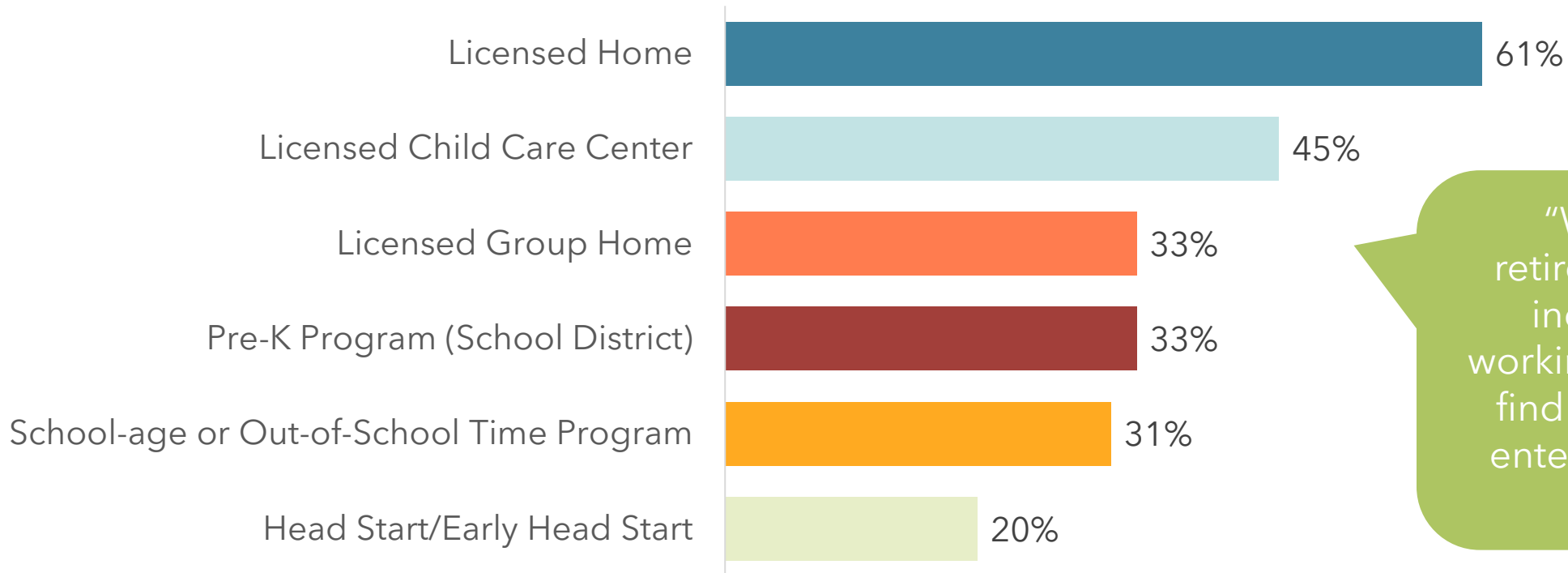


N=538 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce, 2023.)

Factors Impacting the Crisis: Benefits

- » 97% of survey respondents (N=517) indicated that workplace benefits are important in motivating them to remain in their current position.

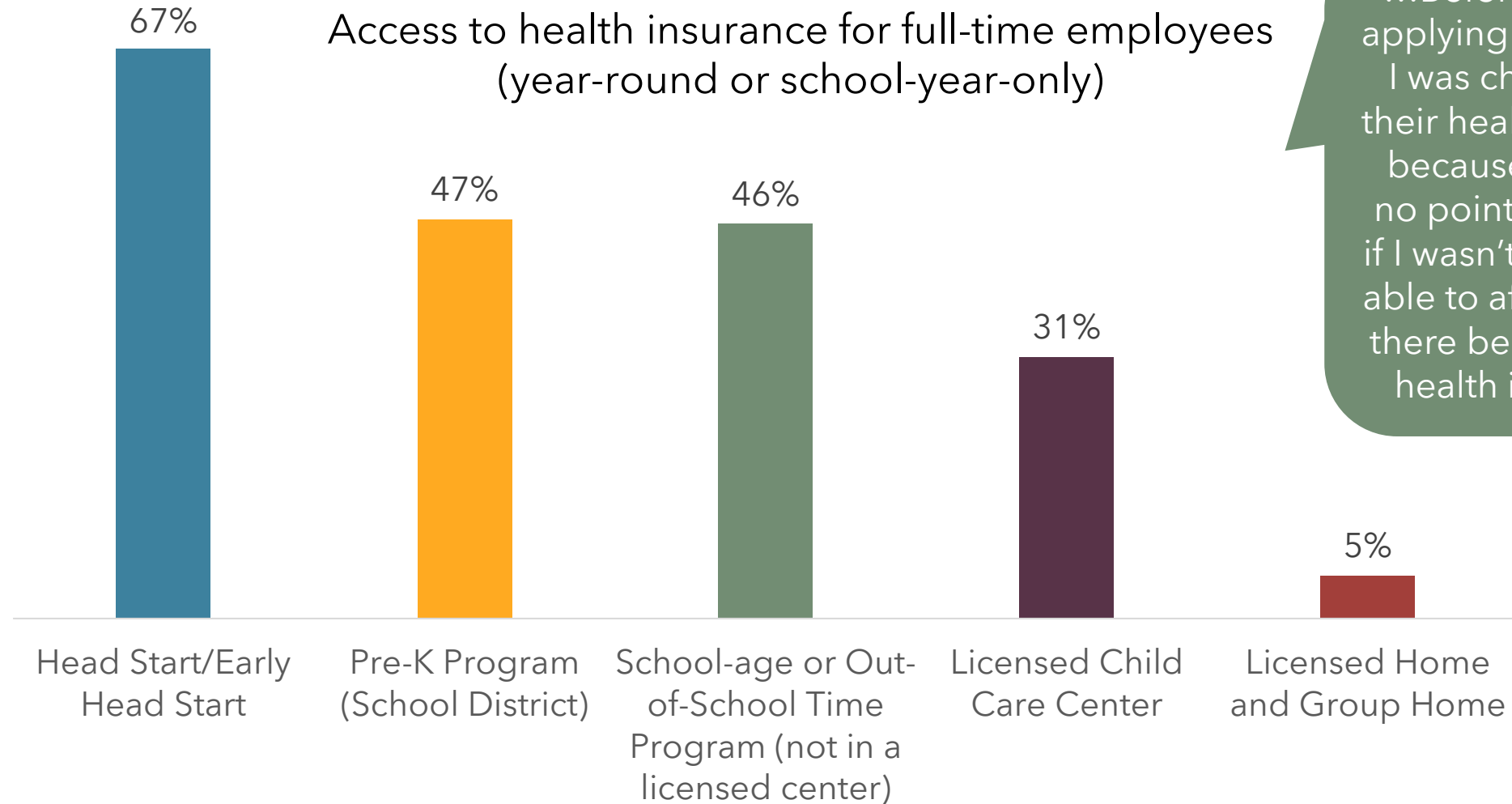
Percent of respondents unsatisfied with current benefits



“Without adequate retirement, I will become indigent when I stop working. It is very difficult to find younger teachers to enter the early childhood field as well.”

N=522 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce, 2023.)

Benefits: Health Insurance

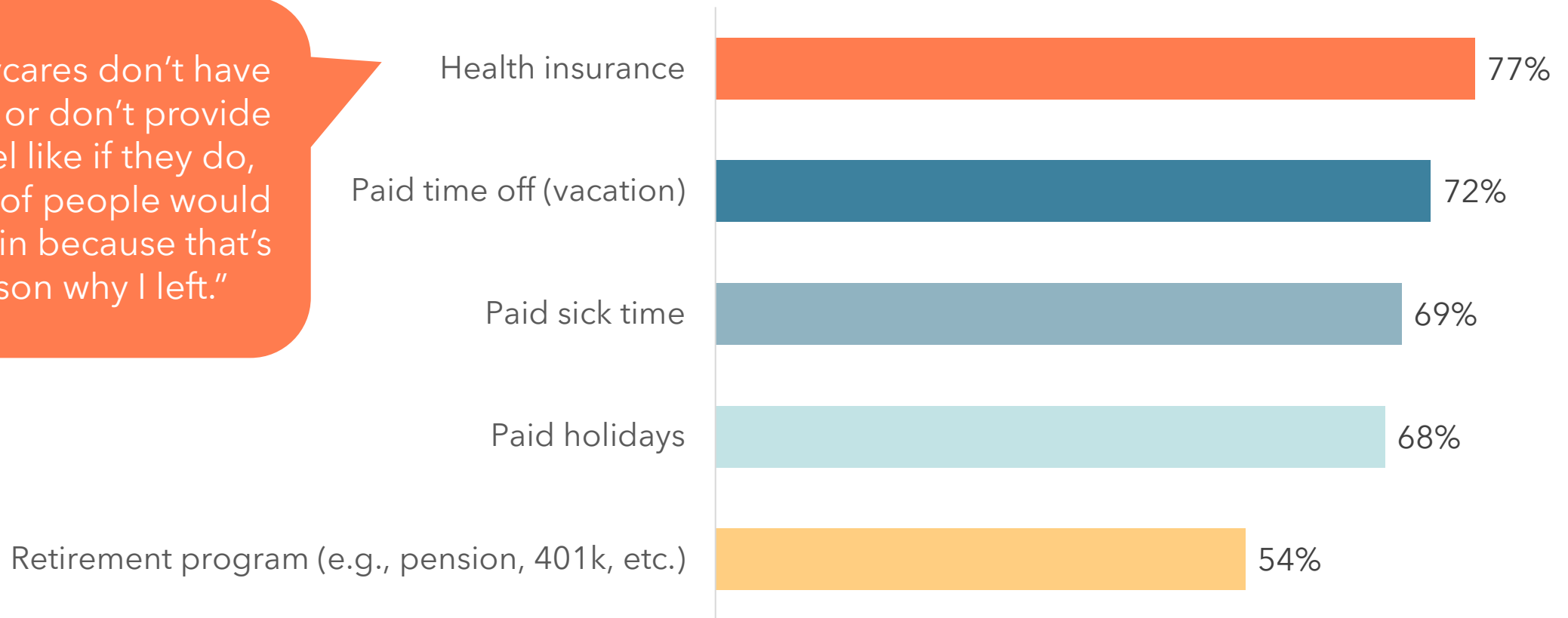


"...Before I even was applying to anywhere I was checking out their health programs because there was no point in applying if I wasn't going to be able to afford to work there because of the health insurance."

Factors Impacting the Crisis: Benefits

The top five benefits most important to educators' employment decisions

"Most daycares don't have insurance or don't provide it, so I feel like if they do, then a lot of people would want to join because that's the reason why I left."



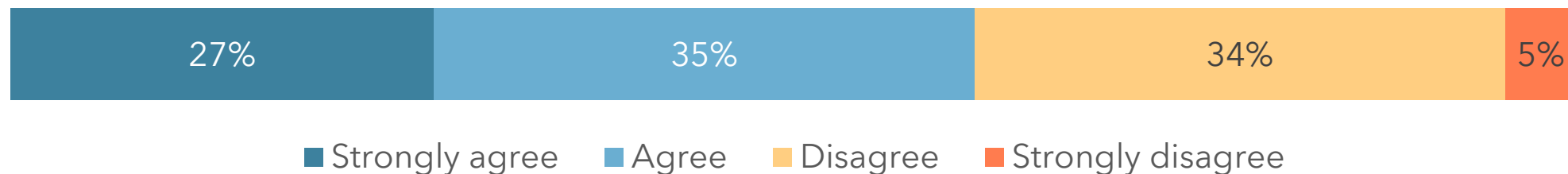
N=539 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce, 2023.)

Factors Impacting the Crisis: Working Conditions in Centers

- » High levels of burnout among Alaskan early childhood educators
- » **Number one factor** negatively affecting workplace satisfaction: **chronic under-staffing**. Only 18% reported having adequate staffing.
- » Importance of **being respected** and appreciated by both management and the wider public
- » Limited **access to resources and supports** such as coaching and infant and early childhood mental health consultation

"...what I always hear is like people are getting overworked. There's not enough time to take a break... like I can't even use the bathroom. Like it's physically and mentally not healthy for me to be in this work environment."

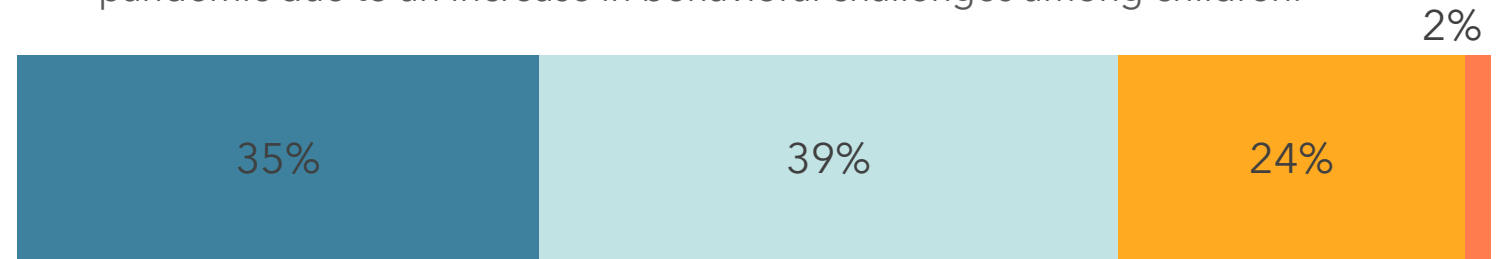
62% of surveyed educators feel emotionally drained from their work



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Many educators feel their job has gotten harder.

My job has become more demanding since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic due to an increase in behavioral challenges among children."



"There has been more youth that have been enrolling with special needs."

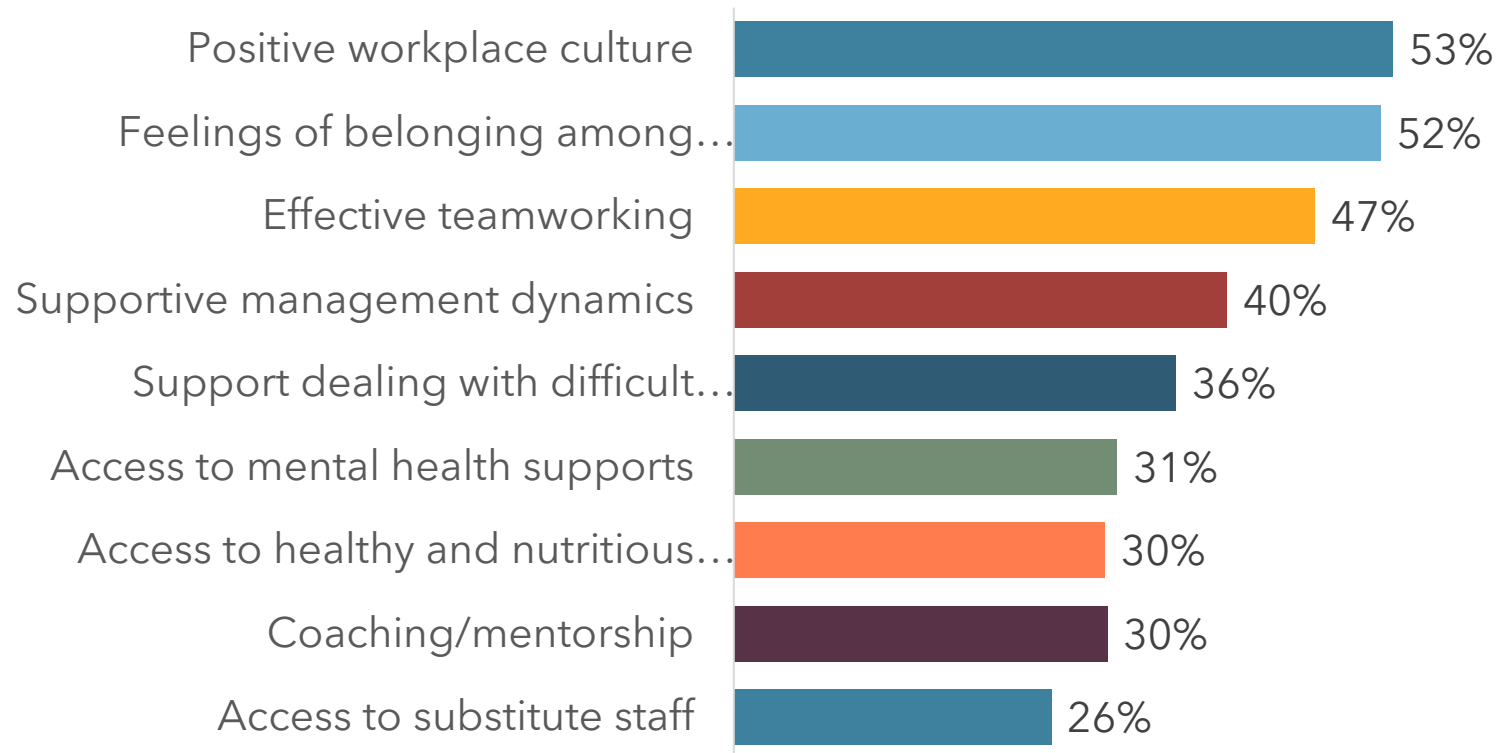
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

N=455 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce. 2023.)

"COVID didn't impact children as much as it impacted ALL the adults in the children's lives... the adult chaos/stress certainly impacted children and has increased behaviors. Also, possibly the largest impact to EC is the impact on the workforce. The resulting shift in the labor market and in wages has resulted in the very challenging (but VERY IMPORTANT) work of EC not being competitive with other jobs like service and retail where the responsibility is much less."

Common Workplace Supports In Place

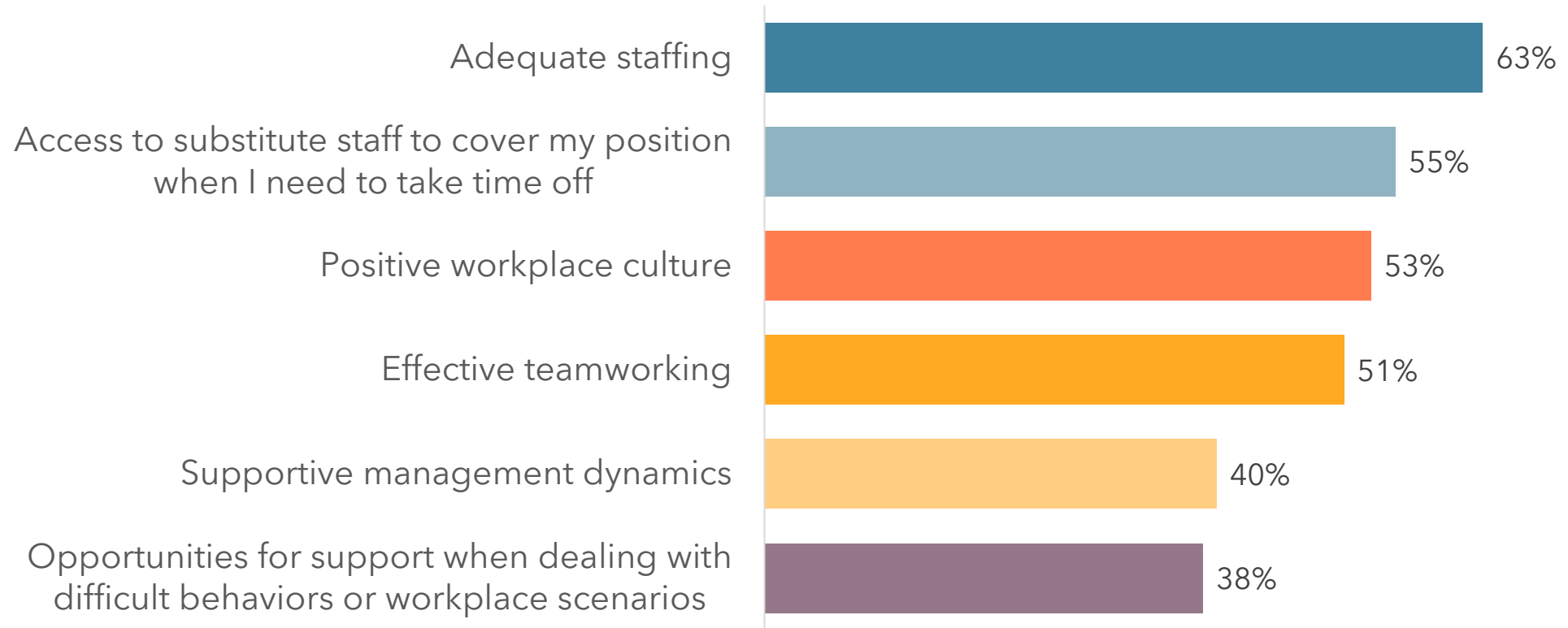
Current workplace wellness supports (full-time, part-time, other)



"I like feeling like a family, like there's been a couple different times where there was like a group of us that stayed for a period of time and it started to feel like a family."

Desire for staff drives workplace wellness

The top wellness strategies most important to educators' employment decisions

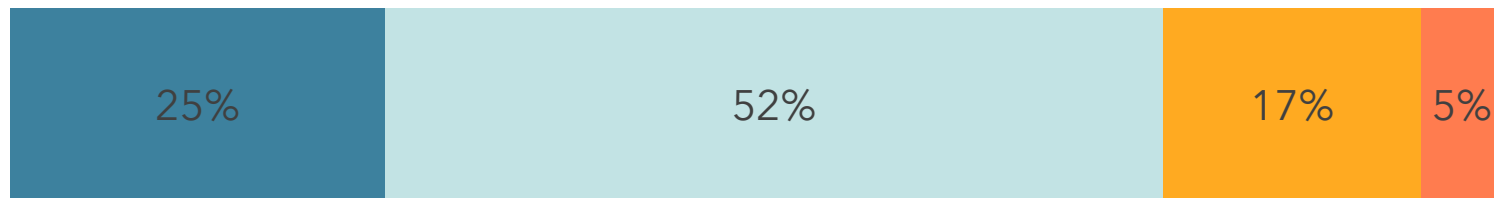


N=510 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce. 2023.)

One Bright Spot

- » 81% satisfied with access to growth / PD opportunities (N=510)
- » 77% feel work is adequately appreciated (N=510)

"I feel that my work is adequately appreciated."



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

"I wanna do work that connects me to a community that really does feel like I am doing something for somebody. Making a difference in both an individual's lives and the landscape of the community."

Other States' Strategies: Data Collection

- » Reviewed **23 state models** and spoke with **8 state-level decision-makers** and **5 program leaders**.
- » Given the priorities identified in Alaska early childhood data, prioritized models related to
 - » **wages,**
 - » **benefits,** and
 - » **workplace culture**

Iowa

Michigan

Kansas

Massachusetts

Hawaii

Nebraska

Kentucky

Rhode Island

Colorado

Washington, DC

Oklahoma

North Carolina

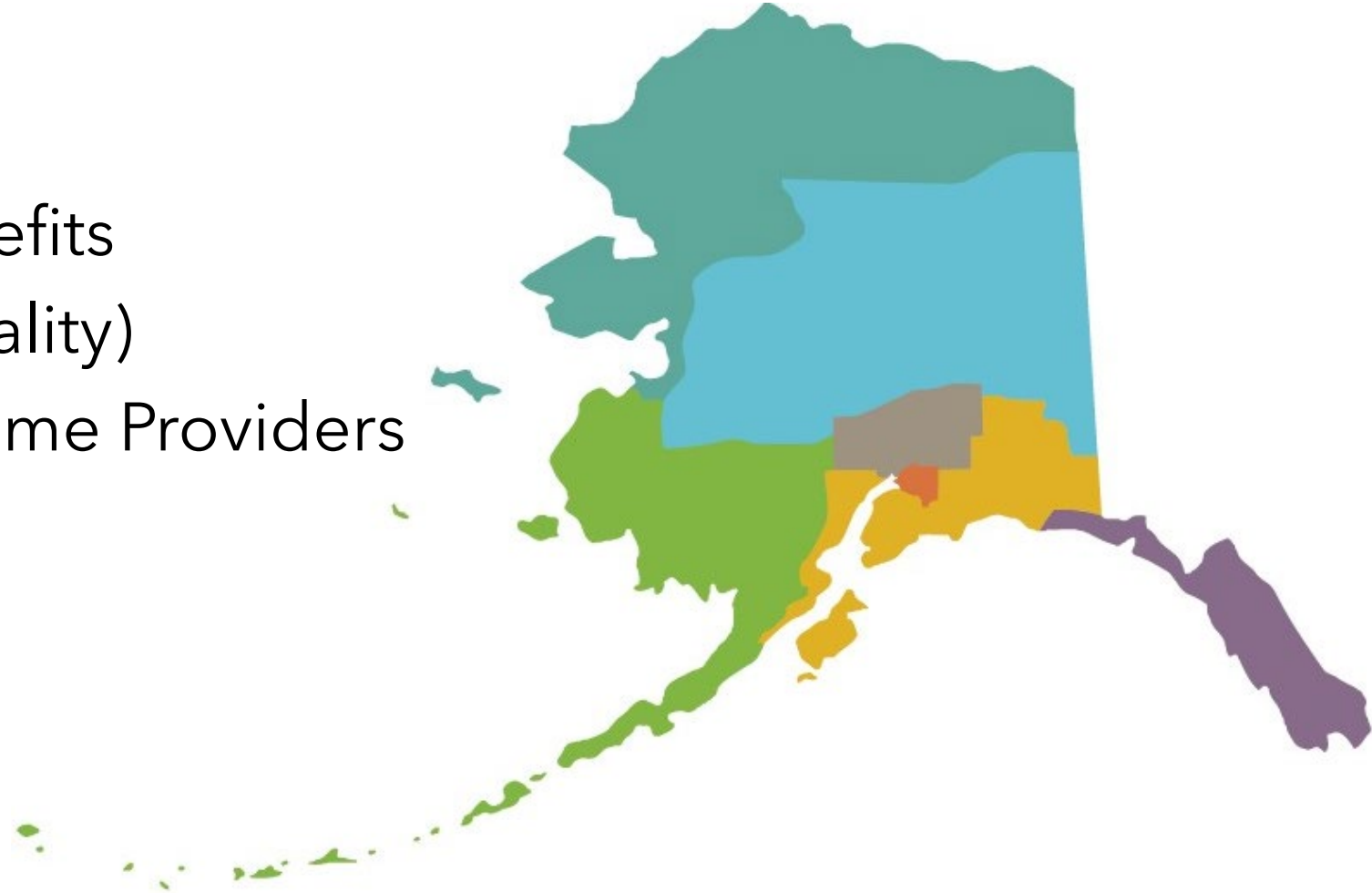
Wonderschool

Other States' Strategies: Key Findings

- » No strategy stands alone; a multi-faceted, sustainable solution is needed
- » Coordination or consolidation of early childhood programs is needed to leverage funding, align policy, and avoid duplication
- » **Increased funding for the ECE sector is *necessary***
 - » Must rethink early childhood financing strategies
 - » Combination of reallocation *and* generation of new funding sources
 - » Pandemic relief funds were effective as *relief* but were not designed as sustainable solutions

Priorities for generating a strong early childhood workforce in Alaska

- » Increase Wages
- » Increase Access to Benefits
- » Increase Retention (Quality)
- » Add Supports for In-Home Providers



Theme 1: Increase Wages

"the number, the dollar amount that you put on work really does matter."

Permanent/Sustained:

1. State-established minimum wage for ECE workers
2. Union-negotiated minimum wage
 - *Alaska HB 46 is a pending bill titled Child Care Provider Collective Bargaining which would allow childcare providers that receive state aid to organize and collectively bargain with the Department of Health*
3. Increase state childcare subsidies; require providers use for wage increase
 - Pay providers on enrollment for true cost of care
 - Based on quality and number of FTE employees, qualified providers receive that must be used for wages and compensation

Subsidized Employment/Retention Bonus:

4. Non-competitive state grants to support wages to providers
5. Employment Subsidy tied to quality and retention
 - Establishing a **WAGES** type system or leveraging **ROOTS**



WAGE\$: Quality and Retention Bonuses

- » An education-based tiered employment subsidy paid to teachers, directors, and family childcare providers
- » Supplement stipend payments to eligible educators twice yearly
- » Combined with grants and scholarships for professional development
- » Details can be established state by state, but typically include:
 - » earning less than a locally established income cap
 - » work with children ages birth to five,
 - » work at least 10 hours per week in a licensed childcare program,
 - » work at least six months in the same childcare program,
 - » and have a level of education listed on the locally determined salary supplement scale



Theme 2: Increase Access to Benefits



Health Insurance

1. Establish other pooled/group benefits
2. Increase state childcare subsidies; requires provider use for employee health insurance
3. Health insurance premium subsidies on the exchange

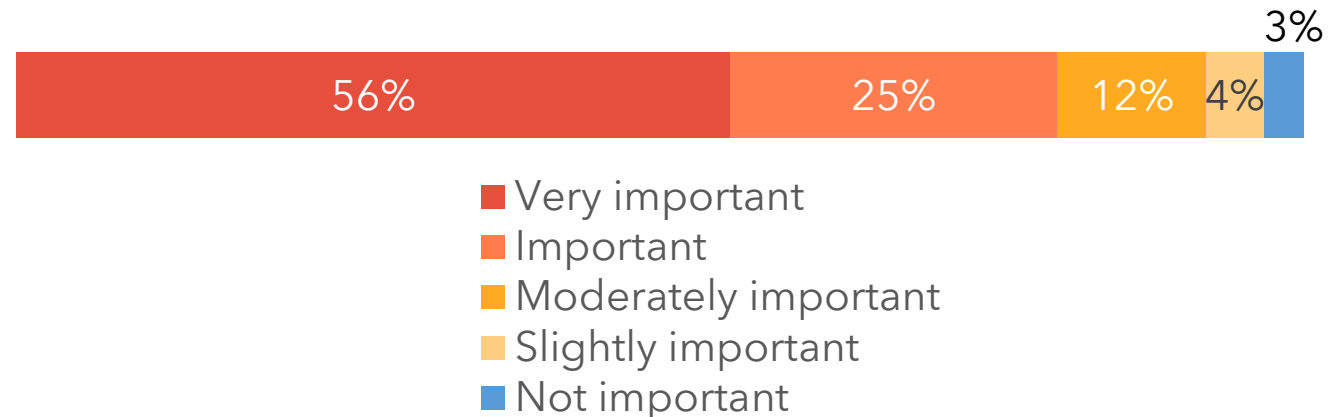
PTO / Leave

4. Substitute pool for small business providers (e.g. in-home providers)

Other Potential benefits

5. Presumptive Categorical Eligibility
Child care subsidy for early childhood education workers

93% of early childhood educators surveyed say benefits are at least moderately important for their retention.



N=517 (Source: Survey of early childhood education workforce. 2023.)

KY: Presumptive Categorical Eligibility

- » Early Childhood Education workforce receive state child care subsidy for their own children
 - » Responds to interest by mothers with young children (0-5) to care for them
 - » Indirectly improves income since workers will no longer pay for child care
- » Kentucky added presumptive eligibility category of child care workers to their CCDF plan
 - » Waived income eligibility for child care workers
 - » Coincided with change from attendance to enrollment-based payments
- » Kentucky eligibility
 - » 20 hours per week of work in a regulated child care program
 - » Providers cannot be paid to take care of their own children

Potential funding sources for wages and benefits



- » *Rhode Island* used **Perkins V Act** funding (federal CTE funding) for \$18/hour + benefits
- » *Washington D.C.* approved bill authorizing \$53.9 M of new revenue from **wealth tax** to be distributed following a pay structure: one-time payments between \$10,000 - \$14,000 depending on ECE workers' responsibilities; plus permanent payment scale
- » *Washington* state has used a **capital gains tax** to fund substitute pools

Theme 3: Increase Retention (Quality)



Leadership Development

1. Fund leadership development courses to enhance team management skills; tie to state credentialing requirements
2. Elevate early childhood education as a profession; enhance recruitment
 - Awards / raising visibility / expressing appreciation / public recognition / host national conferences

Professional Development

3. Develop peer support / communities of practice
4. Continue to offer access to professional development & higher education at no cost

Other supports

5. Increase access to coaching and IECMH consultation
6. Offer workplace wellness supports



Aim4Excellence Leadership Training

- » Community of Practice cohort model
- » Year-long program of 9 self-paced modules fully online
- » Provides pathway toward earning the National Director Credential (NDC)
- » Monthly meetings, a dedicated coach, scholarships for higher education, recognized in the state quality rating system, and with bonuses for those who complete the NDC
- » North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina have funding available for early childhood leadership Aim4 professional development, which meets their state director credential requirements and assist with meeting administrator criteria for NAEYC accreditation.
- » Already approved by SEED; add incentive



Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.)

- » Scholarships for certification or education for early childhood educators working at licensed facilities
- » Tied to QRIS
- » Adopted in 23 states
- » TEACH Early Childhood National Center provides technical assistance to state considering adopting the program
 - » Identification of possible funding sources
 - » Program application for apprenticeships
 - » Operational policies
 - » Scholarship model
 - » Participant recruitment
 - » Database designed for the program
 - » Annual professional development symposium
- » Must have a non-profit “administrative home”
- » \$10,000 to start program + annual program licensing and technology fee



Theme 4: Add supports for in-home providers



Potential Levers:

1. Subsidies paid based on enrollment rather than attendance
 - Income forecasting for staff planning
2. Substitute pools
3. Pooled administration
4. Technical assistance/ coaching on business development
 - Assistance with navigating licensing
5. Grants for infrastructure
 - Sponsored mortgages and leases for new in-home child care providers
 - Funding for building renovations

Only **11%** of in-home providers surveyed have access to a substitute if they are sick





Wonderschool

- » Primary function: create new family childcare programs
- » Recruits people interested in becoming childcare providers, trains them, links them to available professional development (i.e., licensing required training/accreditation as well as higher education along with any available grants/scholarships), helps them through the licensing process, and provides small business development training
- » Builds capacity quickly and sustains it over time
- » Builds efficiencies by combining QRIS, subsidies, licensing, and family portal systems onto one platform
- » Incorporates mentorship and coaching; hires state-specific team to understand local dynamics and systems
- » Wonderschool is two years; states can choose to continue the pooled administration by developing a Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN)

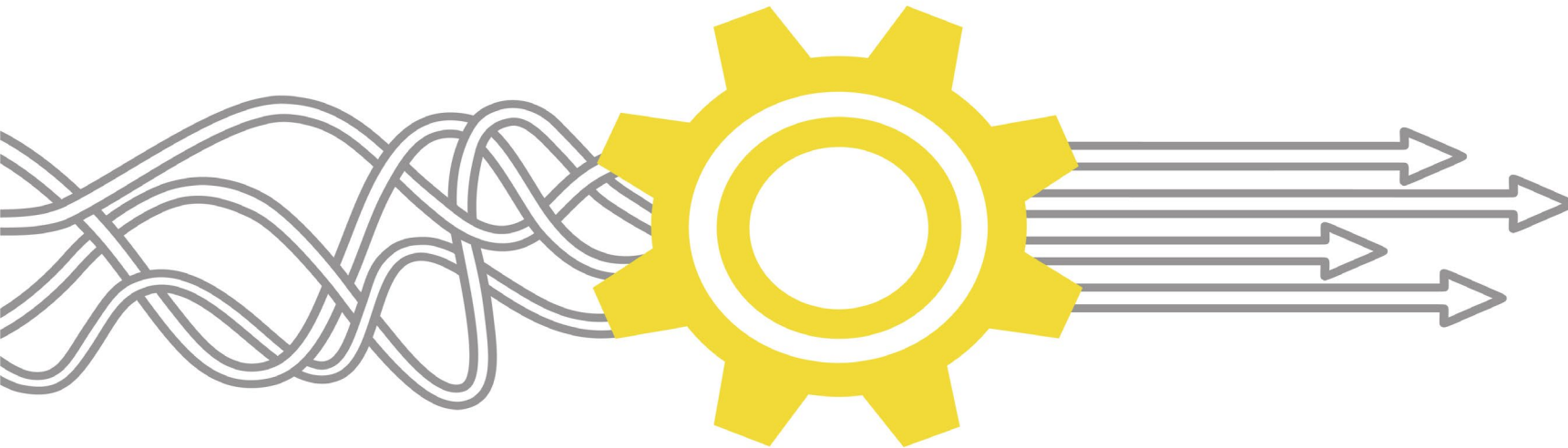
Potential Funding Source: Grants for infrastructure

- » Care Access Real Estate (CARE) – real estate investment trust
 - » Invests in homes as childcare infrastructure – funds can be used for leasing and renovation of childcare spaces
 - » After two years, tenant may have opportunity to purchase



Closing thoughts

- » **First priority: sustainable, substantial wage increase + improved benefits**
- » Prioritization/goals are essential for choosing the right levers/models. There are many possible approaches.
- » There is a direct relationship between wages and quality
- » Multi-pronged approach is necessary
- » *System-level* interventions incorporating new funding sources are necessary for sustainable improvements
- » Consolidate and align planning and funding for highest efficiency and impact



Preliminary results of **Child Care Focus Groups**

Prepared for the Governor's Task Force on Child Care



November 7, 2023

Engage Plan Implement 

Today's Agenda

1. Introduction & Process Overview
2. Findings: Current Landscape
3. Findings: Ideas & Solutions

Note: The 26th focus group occurred this past Friday, November 3, with 11 focus groups in the last 10 days.

The findings presented today are preliminary findings with more information and analysis provided in the final report, as transcript review is complete.





Agnew::Beck is a 37-person multidisciplinary consulting firm headquartered in Anchorage.

We work to build healthy communities locally, regionally, and statewide.



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Recruitment Support

Plus Other A::B Facilitators: Seana Doherty, Ellen Campfield Nelson, Molly Mylius, Tanya Iden, Inger Deede



Purpose

The purpose of the focus groups is to **gather input from families, childcare providers, and employers** from across the state to identify:

- challenges and things that are working well in **the current child care landscapes**.
- **implementable solutions** to these challenges that resonate with families, providers, and employers.

Focus Areas

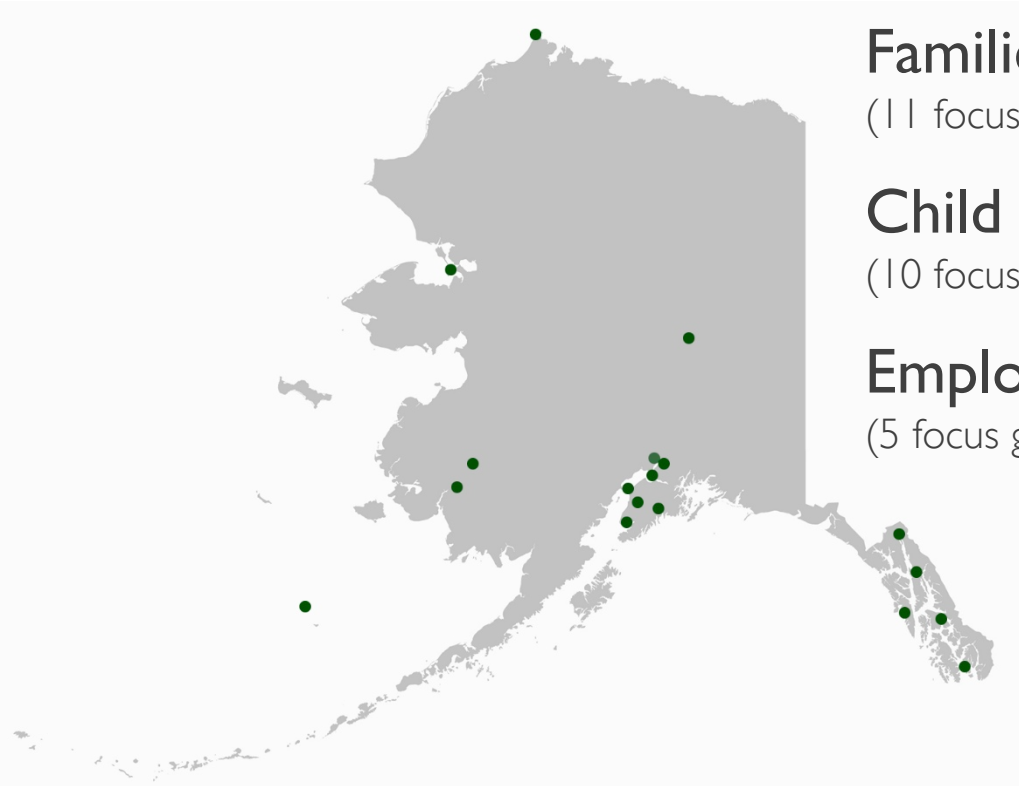
1. Current landscape
2. Licensing and background checks
3. Equitable access to child care
4. Quality of child care
5. Workforce and sustainability
6. Payment mechanisms

26 Focus Groups Across Alaska

Who and Where



Audiences: 122 Participants, 28 Communities



Families with young children

(11 focus groups, 42 families, 15 communities)

Child care providers

(10 focus groups, 52 providers, 19 communities)

Employers

(5 focus groups, 28 employers, 9 communities)

Note: Not all communities on map were visited in person; some participants attended via Zoom.

Focus Group Locations

Families

1. Kotzebue
2. Anchorage
3. Fairbanks
4. Mat-Su
5. Juneau
6. Saint Paul Island
7. Kenai/Soldotna
8. Utquiagvik
9. Virtual:Yukon-Kuskokwim
10. AFN Rural Delegate
11. Virtual: Statewide

Providers

1. Virtual Statewide Licensed
2. Virtual Statewide Licensed
3. Virtual Statewide Exempt
4. Anchorage
5. Fairbanks
6. Mat-Su
7. Juneau
8. Kenai/Soldotna
9. Utquiagvik
10. Virtual Statewide

Employer

1. Fairbanks
2. Mat-Su
3. Anchorage
4. Virtual: Yukon-Kuskokwim
5. Virtual: Statewide

Process: Lessons Learned

Aggressive timeline

Created excitement but allowed less time to develop questions around specific solutions.

Recruitment is challenging & resource intensive

Need time to engage intermediaries and develop unique methods per community.

Multiple child care processes at the same time

Couldn't avoid, but this definitely caused some confusion.



Process: Future Engagement

People are excited and have hope

There is positivity and belief that needed change is coming.

People are looking for ways to stay engaged

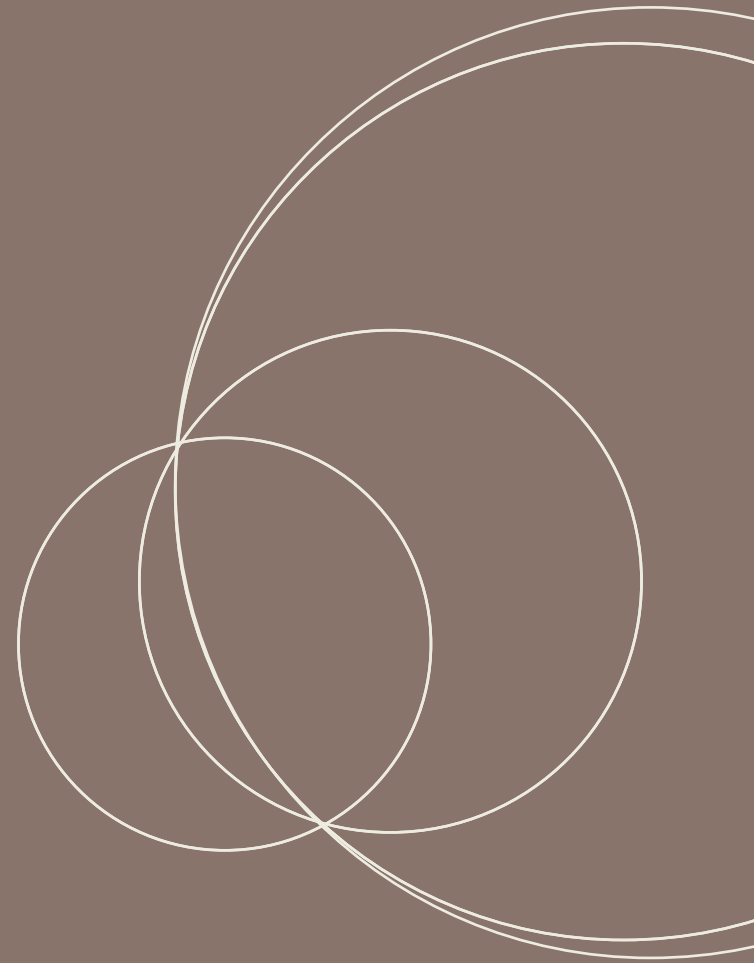
Most of our participants were interested in participating in follow-up focus groups.

Providers want to give feedback on recommendations



Let's start with stories...

Current Landscape



Current Landscape: Families

Challenges Finding Care

- Little or no options, especially for infants.
- People are **planning families around child care** availability.
- **Waitlists are very long** ranging from 3 months to 2.5 years, and often cost \$200+ per child to get on the waitlist.
- Extremely challenging to find care for **evening, weekend, and overnight shifts**.
- Smaller **communities are losing residents** because there is not enough child care.
- It is **worse than the statistics show**, because families are making do by working opposite shifts, relying on teenagers and grandparents, and using unlicensed care.

“My family planning is built around the lack of infant care. We have to wait... and that is with local grandparent help and flexible jobs.”

Juneau Family

Current Landscape: Families

Cost of Child Care is Too High

- **Cost of care is extremely high.** One family said they pay \$40,000 per year (*more than one child*).
- One **teacher said she pays more than half of her salary** towards child care.
- The cost of child care **outweighs the economic benefit** of having another job.
- The State Child Care Assistance **rate does not cover the cost of the care** that is available.
- The State Child Care Assistance **threshold is too low**, discouraging families from working.

“It is very expensive to have child care. I used to work as a server at Gallos, but now I stay home with the children. All of my wages would go to childcare if I returned to work right now.”

First generation Fairbanks family originally from the Dominican Republic

Current Landscape: Providers

Workforce

Workforce was consistently described as the biggest obstacle to operating a sustainable child care program.

- Providers have **trouble recruiting and retaining staff** at all levels of provider type, from nonprofit to those that can pay benefits and better compensation.
- Rates paid by families are **not sufficient to cover the cost to pay a living wage**, let alone benefits.
- There is a **lack of desire, respect, and awareness** of child care as a profession.
- Need to **over staff** to ensure there are enough providers to meet regulations.
- Many facilities operate **under capacity, while having wait lists due to staffing shortages**.

“We can pay our staff more than other providers to support military families. However, the difficulties in the classroom overshadow the available pay and we still cannot recruit and retain our workforce.”

*Military Child Care
Provider, Fairbanks*

Current Landscape: Providers

Payments and Rates

- Rates that families can afford to pay are not sufficient to cover the cost of operation and to pay a living wage, let alone provide benefits.
- Child care assistance **payments do not come in a timely manner. Providers** report that sometimes payments lag close to 90 days.
- Process for **authorization of child care assistance is too complex and time consuming**, with reports of hours long waits on phone calls.

“One of our biggest challenges is getting paid on time. With Child Care Assistance, we have to do a month’s worth of service and then wait 30-60 days. And even getting authorizations is a big issue for us.”

Anchorage Provider

Current Landscape: Providers

Licensing & Background Checks

- General sentiment that **licensing should be customer service oriented**; a need for technical assistance on the business side.
- There is high turnover in licensors and **different licensors do inspections dramatically differently**.
- Issues around **ongoing compliance and choices about what to focus on** (*Example: should child care facilities be responsible for maintaining shot records.*)
- **Background checks take too long** and people who apply find other jobs while waiting for them to process.
- **Background check systems do not communicate with each other**, making hiring teachers for the summer challenging and time consuming.

“Took over 6 months to get licensed. Would hope that the process could be streamlined.”

Southeast Provider

Current Landscape: Providers

Mental Health

- Post-Covid, **children have substantially higher needs** when it comes to behaviors. Mental health and providers do not feel that they are equipped to address these needs.
- The job of **child care is much harder than it was** and there are fewer people willing to do it, especially for the pay rates available.
- **Burnout** due to long hours, feeling that they are not respected, and very limited or no vacation.
- There was consensus that without the **positive relationships with the kids**, people would not be in this profession.

“We teach our staff how to support kids who have experienced trauma. But that’s not how the staff grew up or sometimes how they raised their own kids. There is a lot to work through; we need to help our staff and provide mental health support.”

Anchorage Provider

Current Landscape: Employers

Access to Childcare

- Lack of child care is a crisis in Alaska. It is **impacting the ability to recruit and retain workers**, especially new moms or for positions that are in the field.
- Employers that can provide flexible schedules are doing this; some more of this can help but lots of Alaskan businesses are shift work, including tourism.

“It’s a huge issue... in a town like Fairbanks with a high percentage of tourism. There has been a lot of focus on big employers who are doing something for their workforce but the small businesses still need to recruit, especially low wage jobs, shift positions.”

Fairbanks Employer

Current Landscape: Employers

Employer Provided/Supported Care

- Some **larger employers** are looking into or have been **providing or supporting child care** with positive results in recruitment, retention, and workforce availability.
- Many **small businesses can't afford to** provide or support child care.
- Employers want to be part of the solution but **don't know how or where to begin**.
- The **startup cost and lack of a sustainable business model** are a **barrier to employers**, especially if facilities are not in existence.
- The **shortage in the child care workforce is a problem** even if businesses want to/are supporting or providing care.

“We looked into starting a child care facility, but the hang-ups were twofold. One was the budget, finding a way that we could pay a living wage to qualified workers, the second was finding those qualified workers to actually pay.”

Bethel Employer

Current Landscape: Rural Alaska

Access & Affordability

- Rural communities have **very few, if any licensed options.**
- Even **unlicensed in-home care isn't available** in some communities.
- **Cost is too high** to be feasible. Providers cannot charge enough because families cannot afford to pay.
- **Trust is really important.**
- Interaction with other children is important; without trusted child care, there is less of this.

“Finding any care, even unlicensed care, is next to impossible. This lack of child care is resulting in kids too young to be on their own wandering around with nowhere to go.”

Utqiagvik family

Current Landscape: Rural Alaska

Licensure & Background Checks

- Finding housing and facilities that can meet licensure standards is a huge obstacle.
- Provider licensing process is very difficult in rural Alaska. Requires reliable/strong internet. Web site is confusing.
- Background checks can be challenging; multiple people in one house.

“We looked into becoming a licensed child care provider, but the process was so challenging. ..There isn’t enough housing for people to live in let alone housing that meets the standards.”

Kotzebue family

Current Landscape: Rural Alaska

Culturally & Regionally Appropriate

- Tribal or health providers need to be at the table, as well as large employers.
- In-home and family provided care options are generally preferred over child care facilities in many rural Alaskan communities.

“We are trying to fit all this into a box of modern culture. We have a lot more agency these days to be able to change the format of our community, but we stay stuck. We should be able to create child care that works for our culture.”

St. Paul family

Ideas & Solutions



Solutions: Workforce & Sustainability

Increase Child Care Assistance

- Increase Child Care Assistance payments and expand the threshold, using a graduated approach. *Increased support to families will allow centers to increase rates and allow them to increase employee compensation and provide benefits.*

Support Retirement and Benefits

- State or thread provides a **group health insurance** option.
- Provide **funding or an incentive to provide retirement and benefits**. *Including benefits like: vacation, health insurance, moving stipend, housing allowance, free child care for employees, and signing bonuses.*

“I love my job. I don’t want to move “up and out” of the classroom. But there is no career step for me that keeps me with the kids. I can barely afford a one-bedroom apartment on my \$18.25 salary and I am considered well-paid, working in a place with good ratios.”

Mat-Su Provider

Solutions: Workforce & Sustainability

Child Care as a Profession

- State could “**market**” the **child care workforce**; similar to essential workers and place more value on this career.
- **Highlight the positive change for society** that comes through strong early childhood education (brain development, crime rate, etc.).
- Support **high school and community courses in child care** and childhood development.
- Continue the work UAA and thread are doing to **establish and strengthen the workforce pipeline**. *Payment of education costs, integration with high schools, establish career pathways, apprenticeship programs.*

“We need to treat child care like the important profession that it is—recruit highly qualified people and give them benefits.”

Mat-Su family

Solutions: Workforce & Sustainability

Changes to Allow Development of a Substitute List

- A substitute list would allow facilities to provide time off, and to reduce their staffing while still having security that they will meet ratios.

Mental Health Support for Children and for Child Care Employees

- Integrate child care with mental health professionals to provide services and supports.
- **Mental health support is needed to help staff** cope with challenging positions, low pay, as well their own trauma and experiences during Covid.

Payments to Increase Compensation

- Providers seemed to generally prefer any **additional resources go directly toward increased compensation** for the workforce.

“I know the impact my staff is making; we're making sure kids are eating enough food. We're addressing behavioral and mental health concerns. [We are] protecting our participants from those adverse childhood effects, and experiences. And it's really hard.

Provider in Petersburg

Solutions: Payment Mechanisms

Review Child Care Assistance

- Review child care assistance reimbursement process and amounts.
- **Consider a stepped approach** so that people don't "drop off a cliff" (*AHFC has this for housing eligibility*).
- Providers and families felt the **level of assistance should increase**, and that the maximum income level should increase as well to **make more families eligible**.
- **Consider all expenses and whether another adult is home in the house** to support if child is sick when determining the amount of assistance needed. *The cost of being a single parent is not currently captured well.*

Timing/Timeliness of Payments

- **Streamline authorization and payment processes** to help providers receive payment more quickly and with less effort.

“Income limits for child care assistance are like a cliff. As soon as a person makes one dollar more, that household is not qualified. A single mom who is a teacher and has three kids can't qualify.”

Provider in Fairbanks

Solutions: Licensing & Background Checks

Better Communication

- **More consistency** between licensors and inspectors.
- **Faster turnaround times** on applications and background checks.
- Clear **checklist style approach to licensure** and an emphasis on supporting licensure of new programs.
- **Payments to existing providers to mentor** new programs.
- A **culture of support and collaboration** not penalization.

Connect Background Check Systems

- **One background check system** across schools, OCS, and child care.
- Allow **hiring with a provisional status** using trooper fingerprinting and background check.

“I really like the Fire Marshall web site that has a checklist portal so you know when something has been submitted, deemed complete and reviewed. It would be good to have something like this.”

Seward Provider

Solutions: Quality of Care

Maintain Staffing Ratios

- General agreement that staffing ratios should not come down and these are important to quality care.
- Possible exception: For in-home ratios of care, the 30 months break should be lowered to 24 months.

Hands-on Training at Facilities

- More trauma-informed and conscious discipline trainings.
- Having trainings in-person at local facilities would make them easier and more effective.

Culturally Relevant Child Care Options in Rural Communities

- More opportunities to support grandparents and relatives sharing in child care; financial support as well as training.
- Offer high school and community classes in child development to increase the general understanding of child development and child care for unlicensed providers.

“I think as far as what trust looks like to me, its grandparents. I don’t trust anyone else with my kids.”

St. Paul family

Solutions: Equitable Access

Employer Supported/Provided Care

- **Information clearinghouse and TA** to facilitate employer supported or provided child care. *What models are out there?*

Support Creation of New Facilities

- **Long-term commitment** to fund and help facilities open and grow.
- **Grants and tax incentives** to support startup and facility construction/upgrades.
- **Support the exploration of cooperative models.**
Licensing and business models need to be established.

“I’d like to see childcare centers on site at large places of employment or to have the child care centers in nursing home. This would give elders a sense of purpose and chance to interact with the kids- not as the employee, just as a support.”

Mat-su family

Solutions: Equitable Access

Universal Child Care or Pre-K Programs.

- Look at models in other countries and other states.

Work With Communities

- Work with communities to **understand and provide support for child care that matches needs, desires, and opportunities.**
- **Community led programs and partnerships** to improve the child care landscape. *Example: marijuana tax revenue in Anchorage, Fairbanks North Star Borough and Kenai Peninsula Borough exploring solutions with partners locally.*

“I know it costs a lot, but other countries have figured out how to have universal child care. We pay more down the road if we don’t keep our kids safe and in environments that foster development.”

Soldotna Family

“It feels like change is
going to come this time
after sitting at the table.”

Provider, Fairbanks

Questions and Feedback

Thank you for your time.





Region 10, Office of Child Care

Major Provisions of the CCDF Final Rule

1. Protect the health and safety of children in child care

2. Help parents make informed consumer choices

3. Enhance the quality of child care

4. Provide equal access to stable child care for low-income families

Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families



Priority Groups

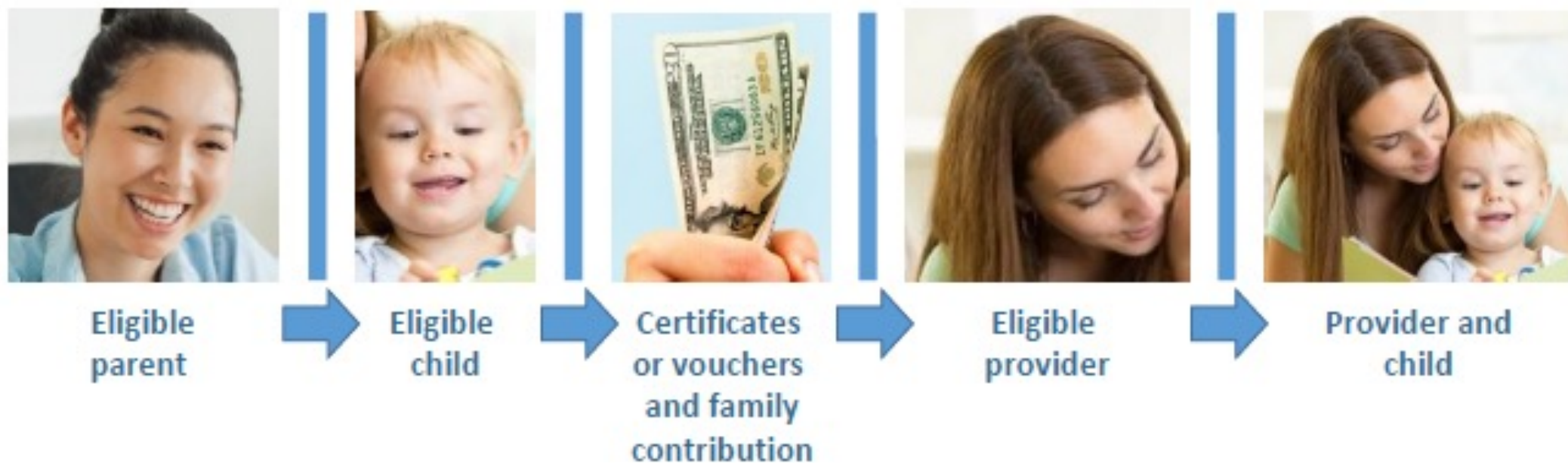
- Children with special needs
- Children in families with very low incomes
- Children experiencing homelessness
- Other groups identified by the Lead Agency



Vulnerable and at Risk

- Children in underserved areas
- Infants and toddlers
- Children with disabilities
- Children needing nontraditional hours of care

An Example of How Subsidy Works



Source: Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. §§ 98.21, 98.30 (2016).

Definition of Licensing

Licensing is a process administered by state and territory governments, as well as some tribes, which sets a baseline of requirements below which it is illegal for facilities to operate.

Licensing includes the following:

- Standards for health and safety
- Processes for monitoring whether programs meet those standards



Standards and Requirements For Providers Receiving CCDF Funds

Child-Provider Ratios and Group Sizes



Qualifications for Providers



Monitoring Visits for All Providers Caring for Children Receiving CCDF Services

**Policies to monitor and enforce
compliance—health and safety**

**Annual inspections for licensed *and*
license-exempt CCDF providers**

**Licensing inspectors
(qualified and trained)**

**Posting reports with results of
monitoring visits on website**

Licensing Inspectors

Licensing inspectors should:

- Be qualified, with training in related health and safety requirements
- Have appropriate caseloads to ensure that visits occur in a timely manner



Background Check Requirement Highlights

Applicability of Rules

- State, Territorial and Tribal Lead Agencies
- Licensed, regulated, and registered providers*
- CCDF providers*
- Current and prospective staff members*
 - Including those employed before 11/19/2014 (date of enactment)

*Except those related to all children in care.

Individuals Subject to Background Checks

- Those employed by a provider for compensation
- Contracted employees and self-employed
- Those who care for, supervise, or have unsupervised access to children in care
- Adults living in a family child care home

Required National and State-based Background Checks

FBI Check + Current State of Residence

National FBI Fingerprint Criminal History Check

In-State Criminal History Check

Fingerprint Required:

- FBI Check
- In-State Criminal

Fingerprint Optional:

- In-State SOR
- Out-of-State SOR
- Out-of-State Criminal

Name Based:

- NCIC NSOR
- All CAN Checks

NCIC National Sex Offender Registry Check

In-State Sex Offender Registry Check



In-State Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Check

Previous State(s) of Residence for Last 5 Years

State Criminal History Check

State Sex Offender Registry Check

State Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Check

The FBI fingerprint check is national, why doesn't it cover the out-of-state background check requirements?

Only offenses/records with a valid fingerprint make it into the national FBI database. Checking the individual State records helps mitigate gaps between the State and FBI records.

Background checks are required prior to employment and at least every 5 years.

Background checks should meet a standard 45-day or less turnaround time.

Individuals may start work once the FBI or State fingerprint check is returned as satisfactory, but must be continually supervised until a determination is made on all checks.

Revised: 02/27/2019



Professional Development System Reminders

Training and professional development are accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations receiving CCDF assistance.

Training and professional development should be designed to meet the needs of diverse populations of children (and their providers) in your state or territory.

Coordinating Services

Tribal Lead Agencies are required to coordinate services with other child care and early childhood development programs and services “to leverage existing service delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care and development services.”

Source: Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.14(a) (2016).

Eligibility for CCDF Funds

- ◆ Tribes must designate a Tribal Lead Agency to apply for funding and stay accountable for administering the CCDF program.
- ◆ Tribes must be federally recognized, and the Tribal population must include at least 50 children under 13 years of age living on or near the reservation or service area.
- ◆ A Tribe with fewer than 50 children under age 13 may participate in a consortium of eligible Tribes.

Source: Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.80 (2016).

Source: Office of Child Care. (2017). *American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care and Development Fund: A Guide for New Administrators*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/american-indian-and-alaska-native-child-care-and-development-fund-guide-new-administrators>.



Types of Tribal CCDF Administration

Tribal CCDF administration (standard)

- ◆ Funding comes straight from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and is funneled to Tribal grantees through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
- ◆ Reporting is submitted to ACF

Public Law 102-477

- ◆ Funding comes from HHS but is funneled to Tribal grantees through the U.S. Department of the Interior
- ◆ Funding is consolidated with other funds
- ◆ Reporting is submitted to U.S. Department of the Interior

Note: Both types are required to operate comprehensive CCDF programs under 45 C.F.R. §§ 98-99.

CCDF Plan Section		Small Allocation	Medium Allocation	Large Allocation
		S	S	S
Part I	Section 1: Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems	✓	✓	✓
	Section 2: Establish Standards and Monitoring Processing to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings	✓	✓	✓
	Section 3: Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement	✓	✓	✓
	Section 4: Small Allocation Tribes Only – Direct Services	✓	N/A	N/A
Part II	Section 5: Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families	N/A	✓	✓
	Section 6: Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children	N/A	✓	✓
	Section 7: Promote Family Engagement through Outreach and Consumer Education	N/A	✓	✓
Part III	Appendix 1: Triennial Child Count Declaration	✓	✓	✓
	Appendix 1A: Triennial Child Count Declaration (P.L. 102-477)	✓	✓	✓
	Appendix 2: CCDF Program Assurances and Certifications	✓	✓	✓
	Appendix 3: List of Certifications	✓	✓	✓
	Appendix 4: Amendment Log	✓	✓	✓



Questions?



Connected Questions

- What is the state's responsibility for oversight of Tribal programs on lands under the jurisdiction of the state?
- What laws and state requirements would be needed to delegate authority to Tribes?
- Could the state, in accordance with state law, enter into a Compact or MOU directly with Tribes and Native Non-Profits?