

**EARLY CHILDHOOD  
WORKFORCE  
CONNECTOR**

# The Case for Early Childhood Education as a Quality Job

April 21, 2026

# Welcome

Housekeeping:

- Closed Captions
- Participants Mute/Unmute
- Chat Feature
- Slides and Recording Available

# Agenda



- Making Care Jobs Good Jobs
- Good Jobs Principles
- ECE Employers Support Good Jobs
- Resources and Support



# Meet the Speakers



**Reeva Murphy, M.Ed.**

Early Childhood Workforce  
Connector, Project Director  
and Senior ECE Subject  
Matter Expert



**Amanda Bergson-Shilcock**

National Skills Coalition,  
Senior Fellow



**Kelsey Swanson**

SAL Community Services,  
Executive Projects and  
Administrative  
Coordinator



**Marian Grant-Whitlock**

Early Childhood  
Workforce Connector, ECE  
Subject Matter Expert



**NATIONAL  
SKILLS  
COALITION**

Every worker. Every industry.  
A strong economy.

# Making Care Jobs Good Jobs

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock

Early Childhood Workforce  
Connector webinar

April 21, 2026



NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION



ECWC

# NSC's recent report invites workforce advocates to help improve care jobs

- View the [full report](#)
- We thank our Care Workforce Advisory Council members for their input (*full list in report*)



<https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/making-care-jobs-good-jobs/>



**We provide  
specific  
suggestions  
of policy  
levers that  
can improve  
the quality of  
care jobs:**



# Advocate for increased reimbursement rates for care work

- **Complex funding structures** mean that it is often difficult for ECE employers to raise workers' wages without seeing an increase in their own reimbursement rates
- E.g., reimbursement rates for care subsidized by the federal Child Care Development Fund **often cover only 75% of the cost** of providing care.\*

\*Source: [https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Final\\_FFYF\\_CCDBG-ProviderReimbursementFAQ.pdf](https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Final_FFYF_CCDBG-ProviderReimbursementFAQ.pdf)



# Use discretionary funds to thoughtfully incentivize ECE employers

- For example, one state used discretionary funding to launch **High Road Sector Partnerships**, a reference to employers “taking the high road” by offering quality employment
- Workforce organizations can serve as the backbone or coordinator for a care-focused sector partnership, collaborating with employers and worker advocates to **ensure strong job quality**

*Learn more about High Road Sector Partnerships: <https://cwdb.ca.gov/cwdb-home/our-programs/high-road-programs/>*



# Take advantage of federal policy flexibility

- Some federal programs allow waivers for states or providers to experiment with new approaches. Workforce advocates can take advantage of these opportunities to run demonstration projects to **improve workers' economic stability**
- One example in an adjacent field is the state that is using a Medicaid waiver to cover training costs for frontline behavioral health workers, thus **eliminating burdensome educational debt**

Note: It is important to design demonstration projects with care to avoid the unintended consequences that can occur if wage increases are not thoughtfully paired with other policies. For more on this, see: <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Thecareminimum.pdf>





**The bottom line: Advocates can use the power of public policy levers to improve care jobs.**





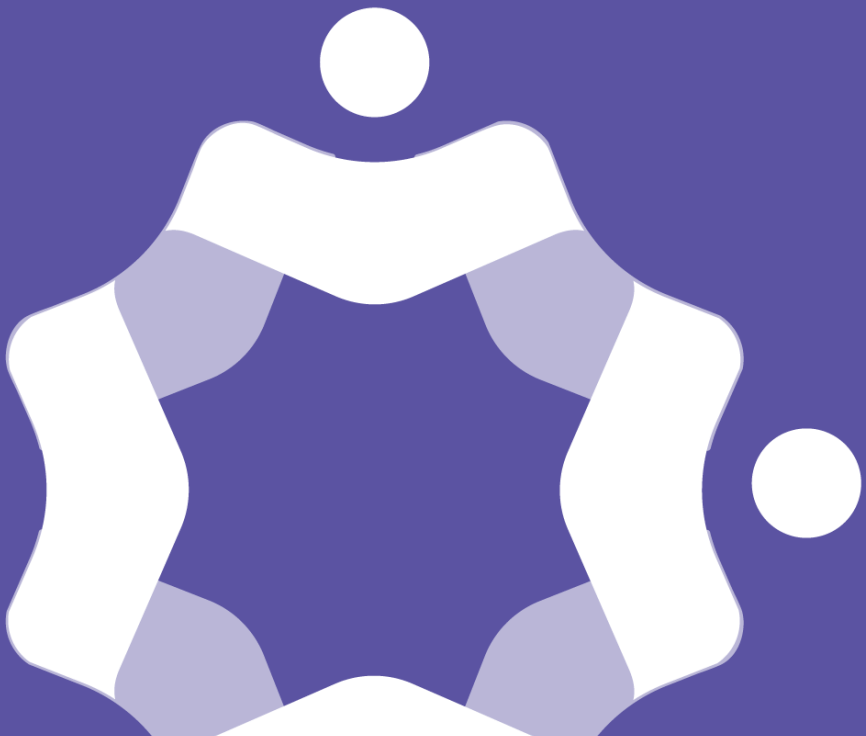
# Audience Poll

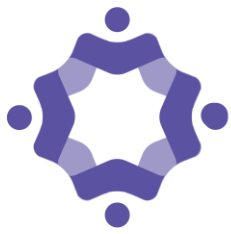
## What do you think makes a career in early childhood education a good job?

- Stable, predictable schedules
- Safe, supportive work environment
- Opportunities for growth and advancement
- Meaningful, rewarding work
- Other



# Quality Jobs Crosswalk





# Results for America: Quality Jobs Framework



Job **Necessities** provide equitable compensation, rights, and protections for all workers.



Job **Opportunities** enable engagement, inclusion, and advancement for all workers.



Job **Features** respond to the individual life situations, preferences, and needs of workers.

© Results for America, Job Quality Playbook  
What Is Job Quality? | Results for America -  
Job Quality Playbook



# The Case for ECE as a Quality Job Crosswalk

**Job Opportunities enable engagement, inclusion, and advancement**

Results for America Job Quality Framework	Early Childhood Education Job Quality
<b>Learning and Development</b> Employers provide or enable pre-employment training partnerships, onboarding, technical skill training, cross-training, mentoring and coaching, sponsorship, and upskilling opportunities.	Robust development and career pathways.
<b>Voice and Representation</b> Employers value and act upon employee input and engagement through surveys, stay interviews, and employee resource groups, and meaningful advisory groups or improvement teams. This may also include opportunities for workers to participate in collective action and productive relationships with organized labor.	High standards of work.

**Job Features respond to the individual life situations.**

Results for America Job Quality Framework	Early Childhood Education Job Quality
<b>Benefits</b> Employers provide access to health insurance, paid leave, employee education benefits, retirement plans, child care subsidies or support, and other benefits, including those that address barriers to work.	High standards of work.
<b>Environment and Culture</b> Employees are provided with proper tools and technology to be productive, connection with co-workers, input, and some autonomy and control in the performance of duties. This culture is established, modeled, and reinforced by an organization's leadership and management team.	High standards of work.
<b>Purpose and Meaning</b> Jobs/tasks and workers feel work tasks are significant, interesting, and challenging. This includes how well a job, career path, specific employer, or industry aligns with an individual's strengths, interests, and values.	High standards of work.

ECWC is making the case that ECE jobs and careers are not dismissed simply because of wages. ECE employers can support the principles of quality jobs that lead to meaningful careers. ECE Registered Apprenticeship.

## The Case for ECE as a Quality Job

Results for America (RFA) has developed a **framework for job quality** that Early Childhood Workforce Connector (ECWC) is applying as a starting point to consider what job quality means in early childhood education (ECE). High-quality jobs are essential to the economic mobility, stability, and overall well-being of workers, particularly in sectors where wages and working conditions have historically lagged. Using this framework, we examine how ECE careers align with the RFA core principles of quality jobs and where opportunities exist to strengthen job quality for EC educators, the "workforce behind the workforce."

Figure 1: Job Quality Categories

- Job Necessities** provide equitable compensation, rights, and protections for all workers.
- Job Opportunities** enable engagement, inclusion, and advancement for all workers.
- Job Features** respond to the individual life situations, preferences, and needs of workers.

\*Results for America, Job Quality Playbook: What is Job Quality? | Results for America - Job Quality Playbook

Results for America Job Quality Framework	Early Childhood Education Job Quality
<b>Earnings</b> A living wage that provides full-time workers with the financial means to meet basic needs based on their local cost of living.	Wages in ECE remain far below the living standard. This gap reflects a funding model where family contributions cannot cover true ECE program costs. Increased public and private investment is essential to address this principle.
<b>Schedules</b> Employees are hired with a reasonable and predictable agreed-upon work schedule. They receive advance notice of schedule changes.	High-quality ECE programs prioritize predictable, stable schedules for EC educators that support staff wellness and continuity of care for children.
<b>Safety and Security</b> Employers implement policies and practices to promote physical safety as well as mental and emotional safety. Clear work expectations are communicated, employees are allowed to take risks, and colleagues are encouraged to care for one another in the workplace.	Licensing and regulation standards in ECE promote physical safety, emotional well-being, and strong anti-harassment policies. High-quality settings reduce stress for EC educators through strong onboarding, mentoring, and clear work expectations.

ECWC 1

**Workforce development strategy in ECE that advances these programs uphold practices that elevate job quality. These programs ensure EC educators feel equipped and supported in their physical safety and emotional well-being. They encourage career pathways.**

"workforce behind the workforce," enabling family stability, addressing current workforce shortages and advance the goal that EC educators are skilled, and prepared to provide the highest-quality care and education for children.

Playbook: <https://jobquality.results4america.org/>

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ment. (2019). *The Model Work Standards*. University of Washington. <https://publications/report/creating-better-child-care-jobs>

(2025). *Making Care Jobs Good Jobs*. National Skills Coalition. <https://publications/making-care-jobs-good-jobs>

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# Job Necessities

Earnings

Schedules

Safety and Security





# Job Opportunities

Learning and  
Development

Voice and Representation





# Job Features

Benefits

Environment and Culture

Purpose and Meaning





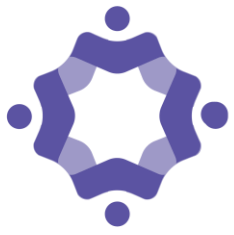
# Apprenticeship Advances the Principles of a Good Job



- ECE careers are **quality jobs**—beyond wages alone
- **High-quality** ECE employers uphold key job quality principles
- These principles support **recruitment, retention, and career growth**
- ECE Registered Apprenticeships **help advance** job quality

# ECE Employers Support Good Jobs

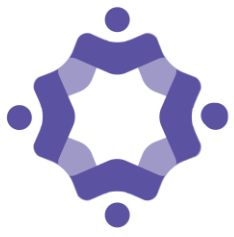




# S. A. L. Community Services

**S·A·L** COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

SUPPORT. ADVOCACY. LEARNING.



# Q&A



# Resources and Support



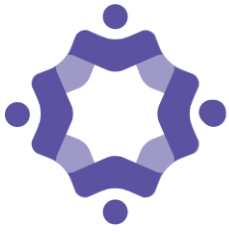
- Results for America, *Job Quality Playbook*
- ECWC, *The Case for ECE as a Quality Job*
- National Skills Coalition, *Making Care Jobs Good Jobs*



# Early Childhood Workforce Connector

An independent ECE Apprenticeship Intermediary, dedicated to advancing a highly qualified and well-compensated **early childhood education (ECE)** workforce through supporting the development and expansion of **Registered Apprenticeship (RA), Youth Apprenticeship, and pre-apprenticeship programs.**





# ECWC Services





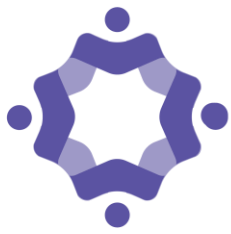
# Next Sessions

**Your How-To Guide:  
Early Childhood Education  
Registered Apprenticeship  
Program Development**

**August 11, 2026  
2 – 3:15 PM EST**

**Save the Date: ECWC Winter  
Webinar**

**December 8, 2026  
2 – 3:15 PM EST**



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 [info@ECWConnector.org](mailto:info@ECWConnector.org)

 Sign up for our e-newsletter

   [ECWConnector](#)

## Thank you!

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