

# North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Study

Prepared for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction  
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# Acknowledgements

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Fellow North Dakotans,

As the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I know our state's most important work is the education and well-being of our children. In compliance with Senate Bill 2229, enacted during the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction conducted a study on the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in North Dakota.

This document is the culmination of the efforts of many individuals. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the individuals who took part in this effort. I would like to thank Dr. Carrie Germeroth, study facilitator from the Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy at the University of Denver. Dr. Germeroth's expertise in the field of early learning and her dedication to the children and families of North Dakota has played an integral role in the development and completion of this project. I would also like to thank Laurie Matzke, Tara Bitz, Margaret Baune, and Cathy Ebert from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction for their incredible efforts organizing and facilitating this important study.

The early childhood professionals who came together as the Early Childhood Care and Education Study Committee took on this daunting task with incredible passion, energy, and thoughtfulness. Throughout its work, the Committee proved what powerful commitments North Dakotans are prepared to make for early childhood care and education when called upon to do so for the benefit of our state's children.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Baesler  
State Superintendent  
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

# Acknowledgements

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The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) would foremost like to thank Dr. Carrie Germeroth of the Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy (MIELL) at the University of Denver. Dr. Germeroth's passion for the care and education of the young children of North Dakota was evident throughout the course of this study. This study would not have been possible without Dr. Germeroth's tremendous contributions of time, expertise, and dedication.

The Early Childhood Care and Early Childhood Education Study was funded by the passage of Senate Bill 2229 during the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly of the State of North Dakota. This Bill directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to conduct a study of the state's status relating to early childhood care and early childhood education.

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We would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations in North Dakota's early childhood community for their contributions of time and expertise to this report. Although not directly represented on the committee, agency personnel from the North Dakota Census office, North Dakota Child Care Aware, North Dakota Head Start Association, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction were instrumental in accomplishing the objectives of this study. We also want to thank Robert Palaich and Simon Workman of Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc (APA) for their expertise and guidance on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of fiscal data.

Finally, we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to the many early childhood professionals and families that participated in this study through focus groups and the completion of surveys. We thank them for sharing their time, insight and experiences.

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# Preface

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During the North Dakota 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, Senate Bill 2229 was enacted, stating that the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall study the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in the state of North Dakota. A state advisory committee representing child care providers, Head Start, higher education, public and private school districts, special education, advocacy groups, and North Dakota State Departments of Public Instruction, Human Services, Information Technology, Commerce, and the Governor's Office, was created to carry out this work. This committee has been identified as the North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Study Advisory Committee, hereafter referenced to as the Advisory Committee.

The Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy (MIELL) was commissioned by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI), Federal Title Programs office, hereafter known as the "STATE," to conduct the study, with the intent that it will aid policy makers in making strategic, well informed decisions regarding early childhood programming. MIELL engaged in a collaborative effort with the state Advisory Committee to prioritize this work.

The following report addresses three primary study objectives developed to guide the STATE in gaining a clearer picture of the development, delivery, administration, and needs of early care and education statewide.

The objectives include:

1. Research and analyze the development, delivery, and administration of services for early childhood programs statewide.
2. Research indicators and assessments utilized statewide to evaluate quality.
3. Research the current need of providers to expand or to create facilities to provide services, determine current costs, and projected future needs.

To address these objectives, stakeholders were engaged in data collection via surveys and focus groups (see Technical Appendix A Methodology). The following summarizes the stakeholder groups represented throughout the report:

- **Directors/Administrators of early care and education settings:** Head Start (HS), public and private school district superintendents and elementary principals, licensed and unlicensed child care ( $N = 184$ )
- **Parents of young children:** ages 0 to 5 years ( $N = 285$ )

The data were synthesized and organized around each study objective. The report begins with a presentation of background information on the current landscape of early care and education in North Dakota. A discussion of development, delivery, and administration of early care and education follows. Next, the indicators and assessments utilized statewide to evaluate quality are discussed, followed by information on costs to support current services and need for future expansion. Lastly, the key findings and recommendations are summarized to guide the North Dakota Legislative Council, early childhood leaders, and policy makers in North Dakota in supporting the development, delivery, and administration of services for young children.

# Executive Summary

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The North Dakota 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly enacted Senate Bill 2229, stating that the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall study the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in the State of North Dakota. The North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Study Advisory Committee, here after will be referenced to as the Advisory Committee, representing child care providers, Head Start, higher education, public and private school districts, special education, advocacy groups, and State departments, including Public Instruction, Human Services, Information Technology, Commerce, and the Governor's Office guided this work.

The purpose of this report, and its findings, is to bring to surface areas of need and improvement in child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs. Additionally, this report should serve as an impetus for further research in this field, so policy makers can make well-informed policy decisions. Such decisions have the potential to improve the early childhood education system in North Dakota, so that all of North Dakota's children have opportunities for a brighter future.

Based on an analysis of the available data and review of research, the following key findings and recommendations are offered for the North Dakota Legislative Council to consider to increase the access and quality of early childhood care and education in North Dakota.

## **Finding: North Dakota ECE options do not meet demand.**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** If the current level of access to early care and education continues, approximately 20,576 children may enter kindergarten over the next five years without any formal early learning experience. Children are missing out on high quality early care and education opportunities that are critical for school readiness and later school success.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:** Develop and then implement a funding plan for early care and education programs that is linked to quality and monitoring.

## **Finding: North Dakota ECE programs do not consistently monitor quality.**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Without ongoing assessment of program quality and child outcomes it is not possible to ensure a consistent level of high quality and developmentally appropriate early learning opportunities across all early childhood programs and settings. Additionally, such assessments are necessary to make conclusions about the effectiveness of programs.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:** Provide a menu of assessment options that have already gone through a review process for all early care and education programs. Evaluate Bright and Early North Dakota so that policy makers and stakeholders have data on the effectiveness of the program.

**Finding: Hiring and retaining quality teachers and providers is one of the biggest barriers to quality in North Dakota ECE classrooms.**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Children in North Dakota have little access to teachers with specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education. Teachers without this specific preparation are less likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer rich language experiences, or create high quality learning environments.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:** Develop, fund, and implement an early childhood professional workforce development system.

**Finding: North Dakota does not have a data collection tool to consistently and reliably collect early childhood data and link to the North Dakota Statewide Longitudinal Data System (ND SLDS).**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Positive child outcomes are the ultimate objective of early care and education and this requires proper management of data and information and knowledge assets to make informed, accurate, and timely policy and resource decisions. Without valid and reliable data,

understanding the effectiveness of programs, advancing quality, and distribution of resources to accomplish these goals is not possible.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:** Utilize the state's current early childhood data committee to develop and then implement an early childhood data collection system in partnership with the Early Childhood Data Management Council. Once this has been completed, the early childhood data collections system should be linked with the ND SLDS to allow for evaluation of the long-term impact of programs and services on child outcomes.

**Finding: North Dakota does not have a state plan to develop a comprehensive early childhood care and education system.**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Without a statewide coordinated approach to early care and education, policy and funding decisions will not be made in a strategic and data-driven manner.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:** Utilize the expertise of the current early care and early education study committee, in collaboration with the numerous entities that work with early childhood education, to develop and implement an early care and education action plan to improve the coordination of efforts to better support young children.

# Introduction

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Early childhood education is at the forefront of national and state policy discussions. North Dakota is not alone in need for high quality early care and learning opportunities for children birth to kindergarten entry. Only 34% of North Dakota children are reading at or above proficient levels by the time they enter 4<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>1</sup> This is an alarming statistic, because children who read proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are more likely to graduate from high school and be successful in the workforce<sup>2</sup>. Success in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade begins with a strong foundation in all domains of learning starting in early childhood. In 2012, 64% of all North Dakota three and four year olds were not enrolled in a formal early care or education program; this is fifth lowest in the nation<sup>3</sup>. National research shows that high quality, early care and education programs can have lasting economic and academic effects including; greater school success, higher graduation rates, lower juvenile crime, and lower adolescent pregnancy rates<sup>4</sup>.

North Dakota state agencies have taken the first steps toward improving the quality of early care and education statewide.

- The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction provides two early childhood grant opportunities for educators and school districts.
- The North Dakota Department of Commerce provided funding through the Child Care Grant Program to assist child care facilities to increase the capacity of child care; however, due to overwhelming requests applications were not accepted past August 2013.
- The North Dakota Pre-kindergarten Content Standards published in 2013, addressing all domains of learning are voluntarily available to all early care and education settings. Four professional development sessions were held in the spring of 2014.
- North Dakota is also beginning work as part of a consortium to develop a kindergarten entry assessment; however, the assessment will not be ready for implementation until 2017.
- The North Dakota Department of Human Services (ND DHS) provides limited funding appropriated for workforce development, quality enhancement and capacity building to early childhood service providers licensed by ND DHS. Additionally, the ND DHS inclusion support program-provides technical assistance and grants to early childhood service providers who care for children with special needs.
- The North Dakota Department of Human Services with Child Care Aware of North Dakota are working to expand the currently limited reach of the quality improvement program, *Bright & Early North Dakota*.

These initiatives only begin to address the issue of access to high quality early care and education in North Dakota. Expanding on this foundation is important given that high quality early experiences are critical to school readiness, subsequent school success, and eventually post-secondary and workforce readiness. The multiple state-level initiatives, though limited in scope, signify momentum and unification among early care and education programs in North Dakota to act upon the data presented in the current study to ensure all young children ages birth to kindergarten entry are prepared for school and beyond.

North Dakota children and families are currently served in a variety of settings. Data is organized throughout the report according to setting and an understanding of each is important when considering the findings. Figure 1 illustrates the early care and education options available in North Dakota.

<b>Early Care &amp; Education Settings in North Dakota</b>	<p><b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Licensed Child Care</u></b></p> <p>North Dakota law (NDCC 50-11.1) requires licensure of Early Childhood Services (child care) by the North Dakota Department of Human Services (ND DHS); and authorizes the North Dakota Department of Human Services to develop standards of child care to be used for the regulation of these child care settings.</p>
	<p><b><u>North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Approved Pre-Kindergarten</u></b></p> <p>North Dakota law (15.1-37-01) authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to approve pre-kindergarten programs operating within North Dakota public or private school districts. Classrooms may include all children deemed eligible by the local school district. This includes special education and Title I.</p>
	<p><b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Head Start/Early Head Start</u></b></p> <p>Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs, serving children from birth to age five, expectant mothers, and families. Head Start and Early Head Start are administered by the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Throughout this report Early Head Start is included in Head Start data unless specifically noted otherwise.</p>
	<p><b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Unlicensed Child Care</u></b></p> <p>Unlicensed child care may be registered with the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Some unlicensed providers that are registered with the North Dakota Department of Human Services are monitored on a limited basis.</p>

**Figure 1. North Dakota early care and education settings.**

There are a number of terms used in the early childhood field that mean different things to different stakeholder groups. A complete glossary of terms referenced throughout this study is provided at the end of this report. Table 1 provides key terms and definitions necessary for understanding the findings of this report.

**Table 1. Key study terms and definitions**

Study Term	Definition for the current study
<b>Early childhood</b>	The period of life from birth to kindergarten entry.
<b>Early care and education (ECE)</b>	Services provided to children between birth and kindergarten entry.
<b>Early care and education (ECE) program</b>	A (1) state-licensed or state-regulated program or provider, regardless of setting or funding source, that provides early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry, including but not limited to programs operated by child care centers and in family child care homes; (2) preschool programs funded by the federal government, state or local educational agencies (including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)-funded services); (3) Head Start and Early Head Start programs; and (4) any non-relative child care provider not otherwise regulated by the state that regularly provide care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting.
<b>Early care and education (ECE) director/administrator</b>	Those in position to manage and/or operate an early care and education program. In this study, this includes Head Start directors, public and private school district superintendents and elementary principals, and licensed child care administrators.
<b>Early care and education (ECE) teacher/provider</b>	Any professional working in early learning and development programs, including, but not limited to: center-based and family child care providers; infant and toddler specialists, early childhood special educators, administrators, Head Start teachers, Early Head Start teachers, preschool and other teachers, and teacher assistants.

The purpose of this report, and its findings, is to bring to surface areas of need and improvement in child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs. Additionally, this report should serve as an impetus for further research in this field, so policy makers can make well-informed policy decisions on the distribution of early care and education services statewide, and the need for expanded or creation of facilities and services for families and children birth to kindergarten entry.

To achieve this goal, three objectives were established for the study:

1. Research and analyze the development, delivery and administration of services for early childhood agencies statewide.
2. Research indicators and assessments utilized statewide to evaluate quality.

3. Research the current need of providers to expand or to create facilities and services, determine current costs and projected future needs.

Several methods were used to collect data to inform the current study, including surveys, focus groups, secondary artifact, and data collection. The study evaluation team worked closely with the Advisory Committee to develop evaluation instruments and to identify participant samples to ensure the appropriate and necessary data were collected. Figure 2 provides information on data sources collected for the current study. All data collection instruments can be found in Technical Appendix B. Feedback on all instruments was collected from the Advisory Committee and incorporated into the instruments.

### **Data Sources**

#### ***Surveys (N = 184 Early Care and Education (ECE) Directors/Administrators; N = 285 Parents of young children ages 0 to 5)***

Surveys were developed for each of the two stakeholder groups included in the study - ECE directors/administrators and parents of young children 0 to 5. Though director/administrator participants represented all ECE settings, the majority (62%) represented a licensed child care setting. Survey questions were organized around evaluation questions. The surveys were sent via email to all eligible participants as well as distributed via the ND DPI early childhood study website, the Child Care Aware of North Dakota newsletter, and various early childhood statewide agencies' communications.

#### ***Focus Groups (N = 31 ECE Directors/Administrators)***

Focus groups provided an opportunity to obtain additional and more detailed information on specified topics. The opportunity for directors/administrators to participate in a focus group was offered to eligible stakeholders. A single protocol was developed to guide focus groups and to gain members' perspectives on the current costs and potential need to expand or create facilities to meet demand in their area. A demographic information form was also created to obtain general information regarding the participating members.

#### ***Program Characteristics and Costs (N = 65 files)***

Excel spreadsheets requesting program characteristics and costs were sent electronically to all HS Directors, ND DPI Superintendents and elementary school principals, and licensed child care providers for whom an email address was available. Response rates for each group were: ND DPI – 36%, HS – 71%, licensed child care – 1%. The intent of this request was to gather data either not currently available or not up to date.

#### ***Secondary Data***

Publicly available reports and data were also obtained from North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, North Dakota Head Start, North Dakota Department of Human Services, Child Care Aware of North Dakota, Growing Futures North Dakota, Bright and Early North Dakota, North Dakota Kids Count, and North Dakota Census office.

**Figure 2. Data Sources.**

## ACRONYMS USED IN THE CURRENT STUDY

AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCA ND	Child Care Aware of North Dakota
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
CDA	Child Development Associate Credential
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practice
ECE	Early Care and Education
EHS	Early Head Start
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
FY	Fiscal Year
GF ND	Growing Futures North Dakota
HS	Head Start
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
NAC	National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NDCC	North Dakota Century Code
ND DHS	North Dakota Department of Human Services
ND DPI	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
ND ECO	North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes
ND ESPB	North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board
Pre-K	Pre-Kindergarten
PD	Professional Development
QRIS	Quality Rating and Improvement System
SLDS	Statewide Longitudinal Data System
STARS	Statewide Automated Reporting System
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families



## OBJECTIVE 1. DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY, AND ADMINISTRATION

North Dakota has experienced shifting migration patterns and an increase in total births reaching significant population growth after decades of loss. These recent population trends are due primarily to the development of energy in western North Dakota; however these impacts are being felt statewide. North Dakota saw a 3.1% population increase from 2012 to 2013, nearly four times the national rate<sup>5</sup>. Williams County has seen the fastest growth of any county, at 10.7%, from July 2012 to July 2013. In fact, North Dakota demonstrated growth statewide, with seven of the top 100 fastest growing counties in the United States from 2012 to 2013.

In 2011, there were 53,829 children ages 0 to 5, comprising 8% of the total population. This figure grew to 55,364, still 8% of the total population in 2012. More than half of North Dakota counties (33 of 53) had an increase in their population for children ages 0 to 5 from 2011 to 2012, with the fastest growth counties located in western and metro North Dakota (e.g., Williams, Cass, Stark, Ward, Burleigh, Mountrail, and Grand Forks counties).

The latest available census data from 2011 reflects that 73% of North Dakota children ages 0 to 5, or 35,573 children, lived in households where both parents were in the labor force. In 2011 the counties with 1,000 or more children with both parents working were Cass, Burleigh, Ward, Grand Forks, Morton, Stark, Stutsman, and Williams. Given that these same counties saw increases in the 0-5 population since 2011, coupled with North Dakota's career growth that has outpaced the rest of the United States, there is no doubt that these numbers are even larger today. Consequently, today the majority of North Dakota families today have both parents working. Quality early care and education is a necessity to support this economic growth. High quality, reliable, and affordable early care and education options directly contribute to the success of children, families, and communities. With dependable early care and education options, parents can be productive at work; and communities benefit. Understanding these population variations is important when considering current and future early care and education funding and service needs.

The following sections present data on capacity and enrollment for early care and education settings statewide. These data are used to generate estimates on the potential gaps in coverage for children ages 0 to 5 in North Dakota. It is important to highlight North Dakota does not have a statewide data system to collect early childhood care and education data in a uniform manner. Table 2 provides an explanation of the different data and sources used to estimate early care and education need in this study.

**Table 2. Data and source for estimating need**

Term	Definition	Data and Data source
<b>Capacity</b>	The total number of children dependent on age, size of facility and other variables that may be enrolled at any given time in a particular program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care setting maximum capacity was collected from the North Dakota Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing and is current as of February 2014.</li> <li>Licensed and unlicensed child care estimates use known maximum capacity numbers as enrollment is not collected for these settings.</li> </ul>
<b>Enrollment</b>	The total number of children counted in an early care and education program or classroom. Enrollment may fluctuate throughout the year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment is used as an estimate of coverage for Head Start and ND DPI Approved Pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>The Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive data on the services, staff, children, and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees and delegates are required to submit PIRs for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The PIR enrollment data in the current study is reflective of fiscal year 2012-2013.</li> <li>The ND DPI collects preschool data through STARS, the statewide online system used to collect statistical information about all students in PK-12 schools. The ND DPI enrollment data in the current study is current as of December 2013. Currently, districts are only required to report enrollment for children whom receive Title I or Special Education Part B funding, therefore ND DPI Approved Pre-K enrollment numbers are underestimating coverage because general education children are not included in these numbers.</li> </ul>
<b>Estimated need</b>	The difference between the population of children ages 0 to 5 with both parents working possibly in need of care compared to the enrollment and capacity of early care and education (ECE) programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the following analyses, total 0 to 5 population with both parents in the workforce is based on the latest available 2012 Census data.</li> <li>Ages 0 to 5 population with both parents in the labor force in 2012 was estimated based on the percentage of children with both parents in the labor force (73%) from the latest available 2011 Census data.</li> <li>North Dakota experienced a 3% growth in population statewide from 2012-2013, the highest in the nation. It is important to keep in mind that the estimates of potential need based on 2012 population data likely underestimates the potential 2014 need.</li> </ul>

### North Dakota Department of Human Services: Licensed Child Care

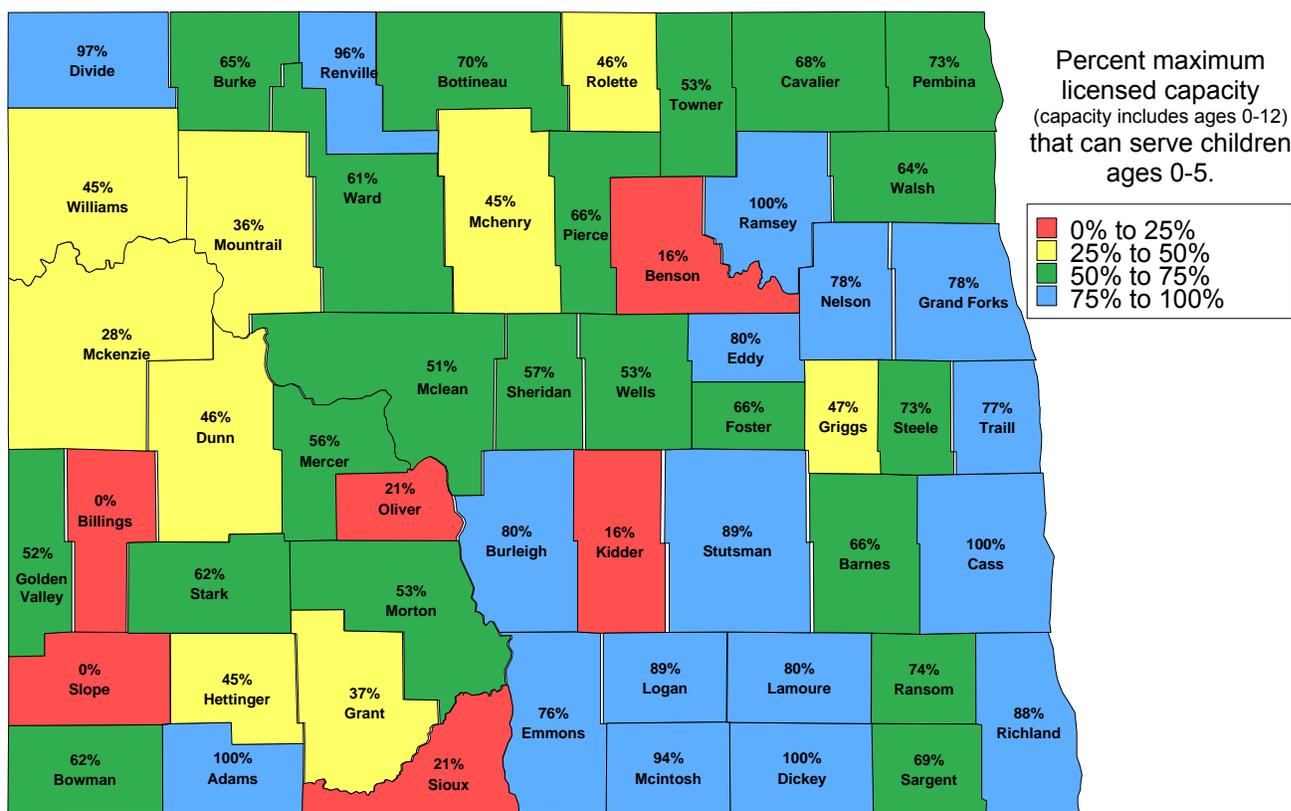
North Dakota law (NDCC 50-11.1) requires the North Dakota Department of Human Services (ND DHS) to administer licensure of Early Childhood Services and implement standards to regulate child care settings. Minimum child care standards are expected of all settings including; physical size of the facility, safety features, cleanliness, staff qualifications, and adult-to-child ratios. Table 3 presents North Dakota's six categories of licensed child care providers.

**Table 3. Child care licensing categories**

Category	Definition
<b>Licensed Family Child Care</b>	May care for up to 7 children with no more than 3 under the age of 24 months, plus two additional school-age children.
<b>Licensed Group Child Care</b>	May be licensed in a home or a facility. Groups may be licensed for up to 30 children, with the actual license capacity determined by available space, adult-to-child ratios, and sometimes local ordinances.
<b>Licensed Child Care Center</b>	Licensed for at least 19 children in a facility, with the actual license capacity determined by available space, staff to child ratios, and sometimes local ordinances.
<b>Licensed Preschools</b>	Provide educational and socialization experiences for children age 2 years to kindergarten and may operate sessions for no more than 3 hours per day.
<b>Licensed School-age Programs</b>	Licensed for at least 19 children in a facility, with the actual license capacity determined by available space, adult to child ratios, and sometimes local ordinances. School-age programs offer services before and after school, and sometimes on school holidays and through the summer months.
<b>Multiple License Facility</b>	Have more than one type of license (ex. center and preschool).

When examining the distribution of licensed child care categories statewide, group child care in homes represent 750 programs with a maximum capacity of 10,434 children. Preschool and multiple license (center and preschool) programs have the fewest with 64 and 63 programs respectively with the capacity to care for up to 6,853 children combined. Figure 3 displays licensed child maximum capacity by county.

- As of February 2014, ND DHS reported 1,437 licensed child care programs (centers, group, multiple license, and preschools) with the capacity to care for 30,465 children ages 0 to 12.
- In six counties, licensed child care providers have the capacity to care for only 25% of the population of children ages 0 to 5. In another nine counties, less than 50% of children may be cared for.
- Families with children in Billings and Slope counties have no access to licensed child care.
- The availability of licensed child care for children ages 0 to 5 is likely an underestimation for several reasons.
  - The maximum capacity figures for licensed child care used in the current estimate include children up to age 12; therefore, some slots are filled by school age children.
  - The population estimates are from 2012, and given North Dakota’s population growth, the number of children ages 0 to 5 is likely greater at present.
  - Operating at maximum capacity is not always feasible for providers given space, staffing, and funding constraints, all of which decrease the number of child care slots available to children.



**Figure 3. Licensed child care coverage based on maximum capacity.**

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2012, ND DHS child care licensing data 2014

### North Dakota Department of Human Services: Unlicensed Child Care

Legally recognized, unlicensed child care providers represent informal networks of relatives, friends, and neighbors. There are three primary categories of unlicensed child care in North Dakota (Table 4). These categories do not include unlicensed providers who never register or declare themselves with ND DHS.

**Table 4. ND DHS unlicensed child care categories**

Category	Definition
<b>Self-declared Providers</b>	These providers care for 5 or fewer children or 3 infants a home. These providers must meet some minimal standards, including a background check and basic health and safety training, are inspected prior to approval, and receive one monitoring visit per year. Self-declared providers are eligible to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food program.
<b>Approved Relatives</b>	By federal law, the 'approved' relatives must be related by marriage, blood relationship or court order and include: grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, and uncles. A sibling who is age 18 or older and who does not live in the same home as the children for whom care is being provided, can also become an approved relative. These individuals care for five or fewer children or three infants. Approved relative providers and adult household members are subjected to a background check, including a check against the "North Dakota Office of Attorney General, Convicted Sex Offenders and Offenders Against Children-Public List." These providers are not monitored. Approved relative providers are eligible to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program
<b>Registered Providers</b>	These providers are eligible to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); are generally registered by Tribal entities.

- As of February 2014, ND DHS reported 774 unlicensed child care providers.
- If operating at maximum capacity, 7% of all North Dakota children ages 0 to 5, or 2,692 children, may be cared for in ND DHS unlicensed settings. However, these only represent unlicensed child care providers who register or declare themselves with ND DHS.
- Data on unregistered unlicensed child care is unknown and typically represents a large proportion of care.
- Based on the data currently available, it can be estimated that unlicensed child care represents at least half of all child care options in eight North Dakota counties (Figure 4, blue and green categories).

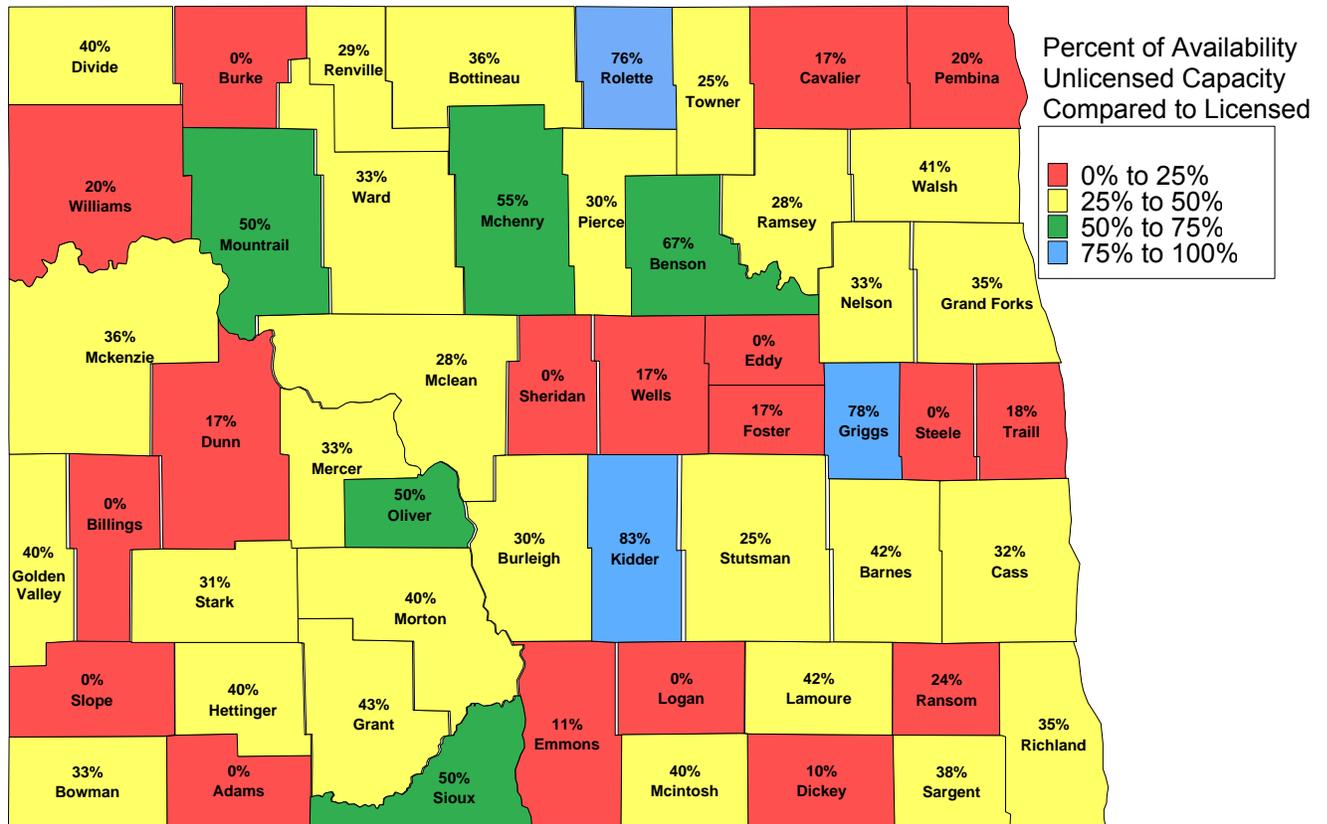


Figure 4. Potential number of children cared for in registered unlicensed care.

Source: ND DHS child care licensing data 2014

### North Dakota Department of Public Instruction: Approved Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

Approved ND DPI Pre-kindergarten classrooms may include any person or school district operating an approved Pre-kindergarten classroom(s) that applies for and meets approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Criteria for approved Pre-kindergarten classrooms are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. ND DPI Approved Pre-kindergarten criteria**

Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employ a highly qualified, licensed teacher approved by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ND ESPB).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate and address all learning domains, as required by NDCC 50-11.1.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities must be compliant with municipal and state health, fire, and safety requirements.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enrollment must be limited to children who have reached the age of four years before August 1st in the year of enrollment. This regulation does not apply to school districts serving special education students. If deemed appropriate through the IEP process special education children must be accepted on their 3rd birthday.</li></ul>

- During the 2013-14 school year, 53 school districts operated approved pre-kindergarten classroom(s).
- Currently, school districts located in 21 counties in North Dakota do not operate a ND DPI approved pre-kindergarten classroom(s) (Figure 5).
- As of December 1, 2013 approximately 9% of all children ages 3 to 5, or 2,346 children in North Dakota are enrolled in ND DPI Pre-kindergarten classrooms.
- The number of children enrolled in a ND DPI Pre-kindergarten classroom is underestimated for two reasons.
  - Currently, school districts are only required to report enrollment data in the STARS data system on students who receive IDEA Part B or Title I services; therefore the data collected by ND DPI is not inclusive of all general education pre-kindergarten students.
  - The ND DPI enrollment data is from 2013-14, while the population data used in the estimate is from 2012 and the number of children ages 3 to 5 has likely grown in recent years given the state’s population trends.

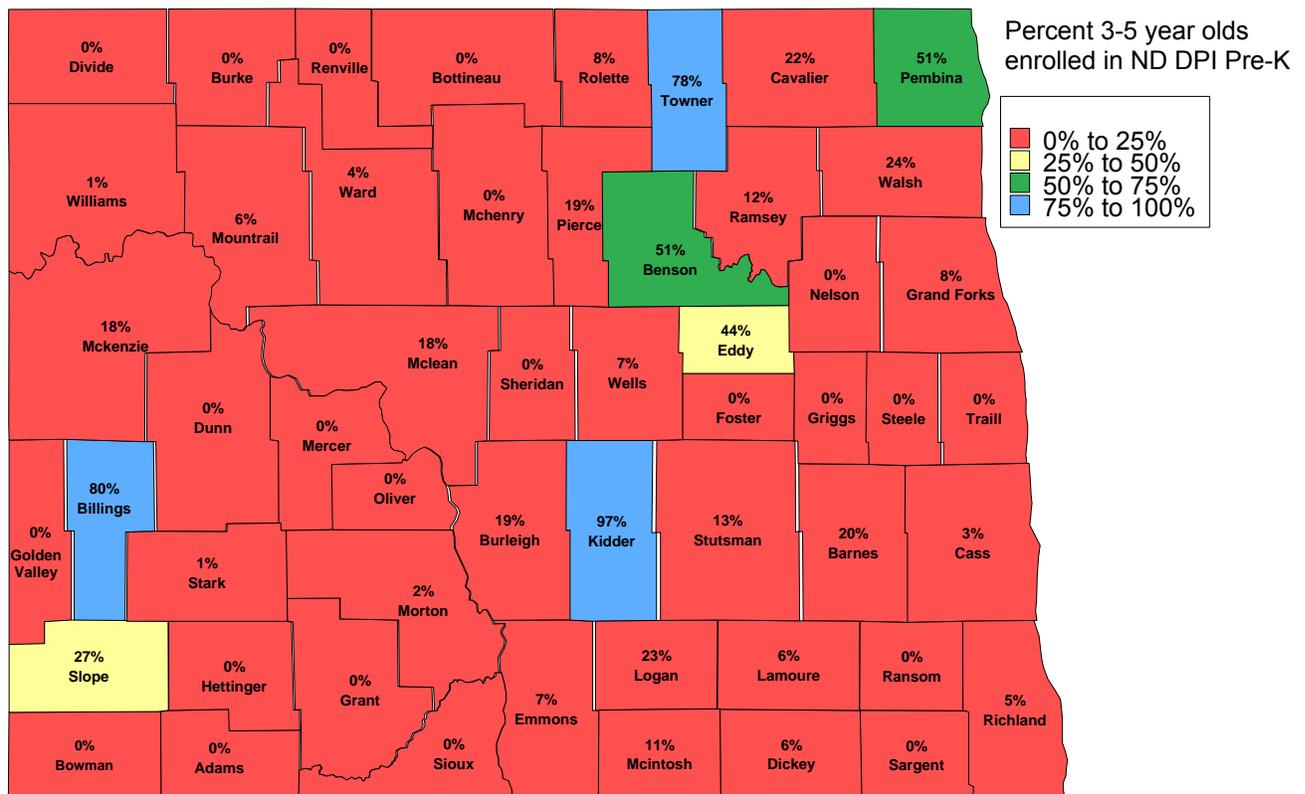


Figure 5. Percent of 3 to 5 year olds enrolled in an ND DPI approved Pre-kindergarten classroom(s)

Source: American Community Survey, 2012; ND DPI STARS, 2013

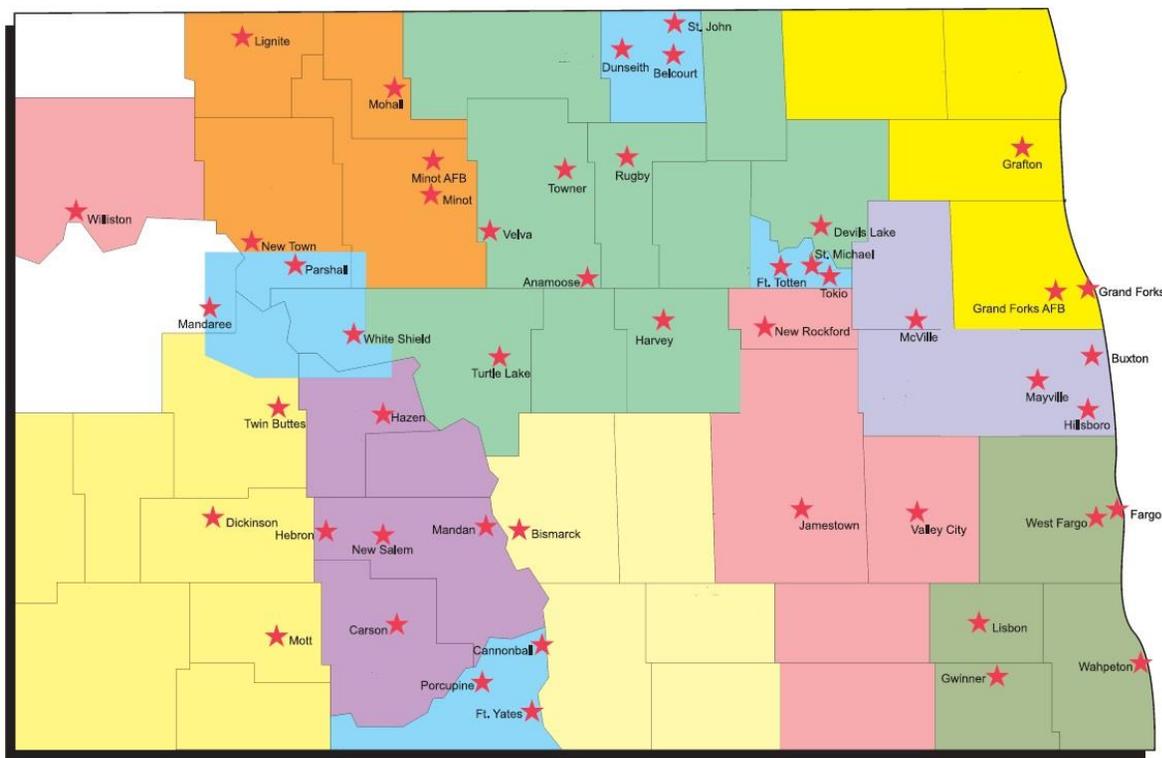
### North Dakota Department of Human Services: Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start is a federal program that serves low income children ages 0 to 5 and pregnant women and their families. In addition to educational and cognitive development services, Head Start provides comprehensive services including health, nutrition, social, and other services determined to be necessary by family needs assessments. Many Head Start programs also provide Early Head Start, serving infants, toddlers up to 3 years of age, pregnant women and their families who have incomes below the federal poverty level. Head Start offers a variety of service models, depending on the needs of the local community and the population it serves (Table 6).

**Table 6. Head Start and Early Head Start program options**

Option
Centers or schools that children attend for part-day or full-day services.
Family child care homes.
Children's own homes, where a staff visit once a week to provide services to the child and family and may gather with other enrolled families periodically for group learning experience facilitated by Head Start staff.

- As of December 2013, Head Start and Early Head Start program enrollment was 4,192, or 7% of the total 0 to 5 population in North Dakota.
- Fourteen counties have a Head Start or Early Head Start center based option. Programs may also include home-based options that cover multiple counties (Figure 6).



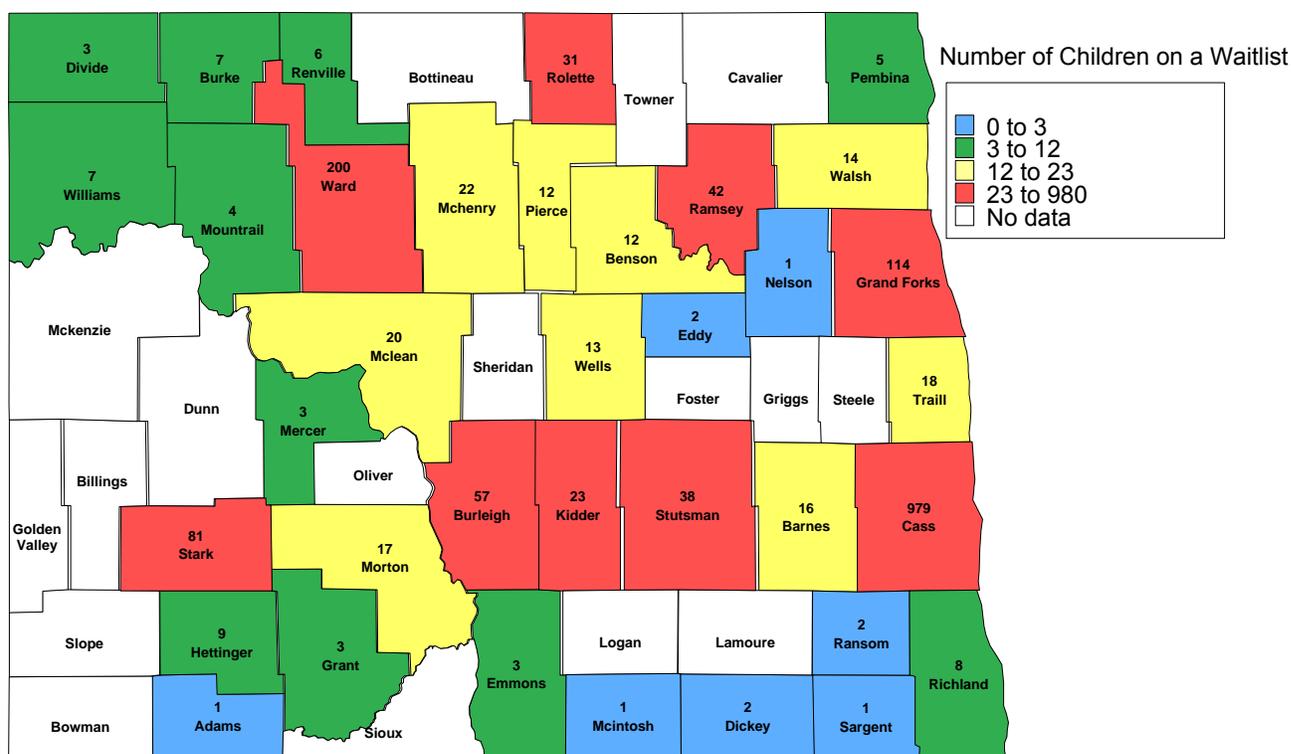
**Figure 6. Head Start and Early Head Start program sites.**

Source: ND Head Start Association 2014

### Wait Lists

Wait lists may also be considered an indicator of the demand for early care and education in North Dakota. In this study, wait list refers to the list of children kept by early care and education programs of families requesting care when the program or classroom is at capacity.

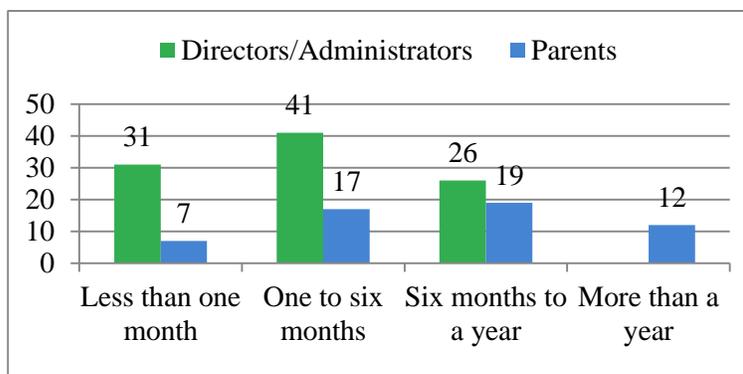
- Directors/administrators representing 37 counties indicated that they have a wait list (Figure 7).
- 139 (56%) early care and education directors/administrators responding on the online survey or excel data request indicated that they have a wait list.
- Additionally, 56, or 20% of responding parents reported that one or more of their children are currently on a wait list.
- A total of 1,777 children ages 0 to 5 may be on a wait list according to directors/administrators and parents.
- It should be noted that data collected via the online survey and data request were both self-reported and only represent a snap shot in time as wait list numbers are dynamic.
- Additionally, wait lists underestimate need, as parents may not put their child on a wait list if they feel there is no chance of their child getting placed in a program.



**Figure 7. Number of children on a wait list.**

Source: ECE Director/Administrator Survey (N=184), Excel Data request (N=65), Parent Survey (N=185)

*“You have to be very aware of openings, and be ready to take an opening immediately when available. When I called about pre-school options, wait lists were typically 2 years long! By that time, she would be in kindergarten!”*  
~North Dakota Parent



**Figure 8. Length of time on wait list.**

Source: ECE Director/Administrator (N=184) and Parent (N=285) Surveys

In this study 27% of directors/administrators and 56% of parents report spending at least six months to a year on a wait list, while another 22% of parents report being on a wait list for more than a year 8%. Both directors/administrators and parents indicated that infants and toddlers are more frequently on a wait list. This is

similar to national trends for child care<sup>24</sup>. It is important to note that wait lists are often an underestimation of need for early care and education services, as parents may not put their child on a wait list if they feel that it is unlikely their child will receive placement in a program. Infants and toddlers are frequently on wait lists, because child care settings are limited in their capacity to care for very young children. This is likely attributed to the fact that younger age groups require lower group sizes and higher staff-child ratios to maintain quality standards, conditions that are costly for providers. According to director/administrator online survey responses, Cass and Burleigh Counties have the most families on a wait list and the longest wait for placement (six months to a year). It should be noted, however, that Cass and Burleigh Counties had the highest number of participants on the online director/administrator survey.

*“My child’s only four years old once. I can’t say I’ll try it again next year”*  
~ North Dakota Parent

### WHAT IMPACT DOES NOT HAVING EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION ACCESS HAVE ON NORTH DAKOTA FAMILIES?

Access to quality care and education has been linked with improved productivity and reduced absenteeism and employee turnover.<sup>2</sup> Employee absenteeism as the result of child care and education lapse in service costs U.S. businesses \$3 billion annually.<sup>3</sup> In one study 29% of employed parents experienced some kind of child care lapse in service during a three month period, resulting in absenteeism, tardiness, and reduced concentration at work.<sup>4</sup>

*“This is a very emotional and stressful issue for families. Employers and legislators must realize that this is a deal breaker in keeping the economy strong. Parents must have access to quality, affordable child care when they need it. The future of the state absolutely depends upon it.”*  
~ North Dakota Parent

In this study, parents cited that the absence or lack of consistent, reliable care impacts their income earning potential and their overall quality of life. Families cited shifting and unpredictable work schedules and nonstandard hours as limitations for child care and education options. In this study 236 parents, or 83% responded needing care and education options five days per week, and 222 parents, or 78% responded needing care for eight hours a day. Additionally, many parents reported that the limited local options require them to drive long distances and hours, which adds to their work day and need for longer hours of care.

### **Review of Objective 1. Development, Delivery, and Administration**

North Dakota is a growing state with more job opportunities than ever before. Families are taking advantage of the opportunities with both parents working outside of the home; in fact, 73% of children ages 0 to 5 live in households with both parents working. These parents need access to reliable care and education options in order to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity at work, in addition to providing rich early learning experiences for their children.

- Approximately 49% of all children ages 0 to 5 with both parents working are enrolled in a ND DPI school district pre-kindergarten classroom, ND DHS Head Start/Early Head Start, or ND DHS licensed child care setting.
- The remaining 51% of all children ages 0 to 5 are being cared for in a registered or unregistered unlicensed setting, or friend, family, and neighbor care that typically receives no monitoring.
- ECE directors/administrators and parents that participated in the current study indicated that 1,777 children ages 0 to 5 are on a wait list for a care and education program. It should be noted that data collected via the online survey and data request were both self-reported and only represent a snap shot in time as wait list numbers are dynamic.
- If this current level of access continues, this means that approximately 20,576 children ages 0 to 5 may enter kindergarten over the next five years without any formal early learning experience.

## OBJECTIVE 2. INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS TO EVALUATE QUALITY

Research shows that high quality, early care and education programs can have lasting positive effects including;

- greater school success,
- higher graduation rates,
- lower juvenile crime, and
- decreased adolescent pregnancy rates<sup>6</sup>.

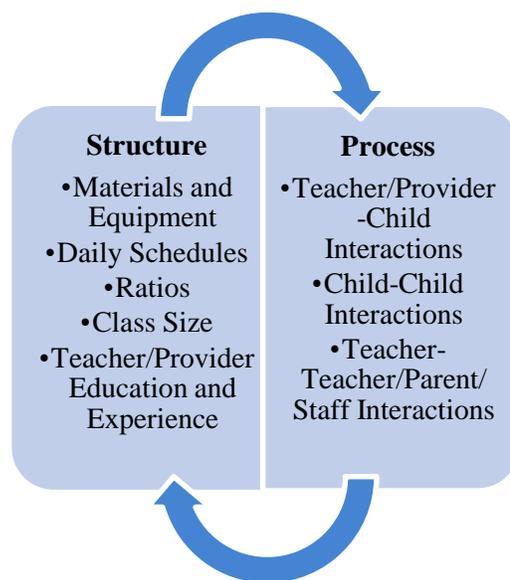
Moreover, these effects are magnified for children from at-risk backgrounds or those with special needs that are least likely to have access to quality early care and education.

**What is Quality?** Research examining quality and child outcomes commonly takes an approach to defining quality as structure or process indicators (Figure 9).

(1) *Structural quality*, includes features of the environment, such as group size, ratio, and staff qualifications that can increase the likelihood of positive process quality. Structural quality indicators are often easily regulated.

(2) *Process quality*, involves interactions with children and structuring of the environment so that care is emotionally responsive, stimulating, and safe.

These two approaches to quality apply to all early care and education settings (child care centers, family child care, pre-kindergarten, preschools, Head Start/Early Head Start, and family, friend and neighbor care), though the ways in which they are observed and measured differ by setting as well as by age of children (e.g. infants and toddlers versus preschool-age children).



**Figure 9. Indicators of Quality.**

## Structural Quality

In the current study, data on structural quality indicators utilized statewide were collected via the online director/administrator survey and an Excel data request. These indicators are easily regulated by state agencies and licensing policies. Indicators of structural quality are often compared across early care and education setting in the following sections.

### ➤ Group/Class Size and Ratios

Research indicates that when groups or classes are smaller and adult-to-child ratios are higher, teachers provide more stimulating, responsive, warm, and supportive interactions for children. Moreover, class size has been linked with overall quality of the classroom<sup>7</sup>. A study examining structural quality indicators in three states found that adult-to-child ratios were the only factor other than teacher wages that predicted the quality of preschool classrooms<sup>8</sup>.

North Dakota early care and education program policies on group/class size and adult-to-child ratios for ages 0 to 5 are reported in Tables 7 and 8, respectively. These tables also present recommendations from national early childhood organizations, generally regarded as providing research guidance on standards, including recommendations from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for preschool age classrooms and Zero to Three for infant-toddler age classrooms for comparison.

**Table 7. ND ECE maximum group/class size policies**

	0-17mo	18-35mo	3yrs	4yrs	5yrs
ND DHS Licensed Child Care Centers*	10	15	20	25	30
ND DHS Head Start				20	
ND DHS Early Head Start	8	17 (full day) 15 (half day)			
ND DPI Approved Pre-Kindergarten				25	
National Early Childhood Organizations					
NAEYC				20	
Zero to Three**	9	12			

\*If mixed ages, group size must adhere to the age of the majority of children. If children under 18 months are part of the mixed group, their group size must be maintained.

\*\* Recommends, centers, group homes, and family day care homes with mixed age groupings should never have more than two children under two years of age in a single group.

**Table 8. ND ECE minimum adult-to-child ratio policies**

	0-17mo	18-35mo	3yrs	4yrs	5yrs
ND DHS Licensed Child Care Centers	1:4	1:5	1:7	1:10	1:12
ND DHS Head Start				1:10	
ND DHS Early Head Start	1:4				
ND DPI Approved Pre-Kindergarten				1:10	
National Early Childhood Organizations					
NAEYC				1:10	
Zero to Three	1:3		1:4		

- North Dakota state licensing regulations for licensed child care set limits on group size and adult-to-child ratios that vary by type of setting and age of the child. ND DHS licensed child care centers' group sizes and adult-to-child ratios are slightly higher than national organizations recommend. However, they are consistent with licensed child care group sizes and adult-to-child ratios utilized in many state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).
- Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards also provide regulations on group sizes and adult-to-child ratios; however, if the local licensing regulations are more stringent, then providers must adhere to the more stringent regulations. In North Dakota the Head Start Performance Standards are more stringent than licensing regulations and are in line with national recommendations.
- ND DPI school districts that have an Approved Pre-K classrooms follow adult-to-child ratio guidelines of 1:10 with best practices outlined in North Dakota Administrative Code 67-19-01-36(2)(a)(1) recommends 20 students per classroom, but may not exceed twenty-five.

### ➤ Curriculum

A research-based curriculum can support teachers in identifying important concepts and skills as well as approaches for supporting children's learning and development. A developmentally appropriate curriculum that encompasses all domains of learning is important to ensure there is intentional planning of a daily schedule that uses time efficiently and provides opportunities for learning both independently and in groups according to their developmental needs and interests and through play. A curriculum should be consistent with program goals and promote learning and development in all areas.

In North Dakota, early care and education settings are typically provided guidance by state agencies on a curriculum selection. Table 9 summarizes the current guidance and policies for programs when selecting a curriculum.

In this study 113 (62%) of directors/administrators of early care and education settings report using a curriculum. Of these, 87 (48%) use a published curriculum. Those not using a published curriculum report using either a locally created curriculum, standards document to guide instruction, or did not provide information. ND DPI collects information on curricula from districts that seek pre-kindergarten designation approval. Curricula are required to meet ND CC requirements and address all learning domains. More than half of ND DPI pre-kindergarten classrooms (53%) use a curriculum that they created on their own at the time of their approval.

In this study directors/administrators reported using more than 36 different curricula. The current study did not evaluate the effectiveness or quality of these curricula. It will be important for future studies to evaluate curricula further to provide a more comprehensive examination of the quality and effectiveness of curricula utilized statewide.

**Table 9. ND ECE curriculum guidance and policies**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	North Dakota Century Code 15.1-37-01 requires that pre-kindergarten classrooms use a curriculum that meets all learning domains as outlined in the North Dakota Pre-kindergarten Content Standards. ND DPI developed guidance for selecting an early childhood curriculum in both public and private pre-kindergarten settings.
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	Head Start follows federal requirements that an implemented curriculum be scientifically-based and: (A) promotes young children's school readiness in the areas of language and cognitive development, early reading and mathematics skills, socio-emotional development, physical development, and approaches to learning; (B) is based on scientifically valid research and has standardized training procedures and curriculum materials to support implementation; (C) is comprehensive and linked to ongoing assessment, with developmental and learning goals and measurable objectives; (D) is focused on improving the learning environment, teaching practices, family involvement, and child outcomes across all areas of development; and (E) it is aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework developed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and, as appropriate, State early learning standards;
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	ND DHS does not regulate curricula utilized by licensed child care; however, CCA ND supplies providers with guidance on selecting curricula as well as a list of options that may be considered for child care and early learning programs serving children ages 0 to 5.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Preschool</b>	Licensed preschools must have a written curriculum that describes the program's philosophy, goals, objectives, and includes a program evaluation process. Additionally, the curriculum must: a) Promote cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth; b) Be based on the developmental levels and needs of children and; c) Provide daily outdoor play.

### ➤ Assessment Practices

Across early childhood systems there are multiple forms and targets of assessment. Additionally, there are numerous ways of reporting and using data<sup>9</sup>. Each form serves distinctive purposes, has specific procedures for reporting, and ways of using assessment data. These assessments produce many different types of data on children and programs<sup>10</sup>.

### Child Assessment

Research consistently shows that the most effective early childhood programs are those that include a comprehensive, ongoing assessment of children's development<sup>11</sup>. The main purposes of assessment are: (1) to inform and to support decision making related to teaching and learning, (2) to identify significant concerns that may require focused intervention for individual children, and (3) to generally help programs to improve<sup>12</sup>. Table 10 describes child assessment policies across North Dakota ECE programs as it relates to the purpose of the current study.

**Table 10. ND ECE Program Child Assessment Policies**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-kindergarten classrooms with general education children are recommended to utilize assessments tied to developmentally appropriate, research-based curriculum.</li> <li>• Title I Pre-kindergarten classrooms assess children a minimum of two times a year for progress monitoring and provide reports for parents. All progress monitoring tools must be based on scientifically-based research.</li> <li>• The North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes (ND ECO) Process requires ratings at entry and exit from early childhood special education services for children who will be receiving services for at least 6 months.</li> </ul>
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	<p>Head Start follows federal regulations that assessments should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid and reliable research based observational instruments,</li> <li>• Implemented by qualified individuals with demonstrated reliability; and</li> <li>• Assess classroom quality, including assessing multiple dimensions of teacher-child interactions that are linked to positive child development and later achievement.</li> </ul>
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments should be aligned with standards, curriculum, and program goals for children’s learning, be evidence-based, use multiple sources data over time, inform families of children’s growth and development, and be inclusive of all children.</li> </ul>
<b>ND DHS Licensed Preschool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ND DHS licensing regulations require that licensed preschools have a program evaluation process.</li> </ul>

In this study 96 (53%) of directors/administrators reported using an assessment to collect data on child performance (Figure 10). Of these, 56 (31%) utilize an assessment that has been published, while the remainder most frequently reported using a teacher-developed assessment.

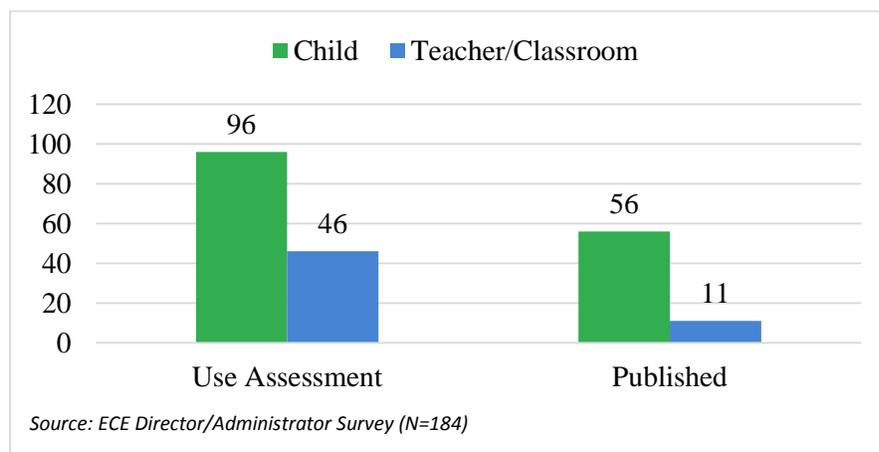
It is important that assessments review children’s learning and progress on a regular and ongoing basis, as opposed to only assessing children’s learning or progress at the beginning and/or end of the school year<sup>13</sup>. These assessments are formative in nature, rather than summative. Formative assessments are specifically designed to monitor children's progress and to guide and improve instructional practice, providing teachers with a current understanding of children’s growth and development. In the current study most directors/administrators (60) reported using assessments in an ongoing manner (Figure 11); for multiple purposes; most often for the purpose of screening, monitoring, and informing instruction (Figure 12).

#### Teacher/classroom assessments

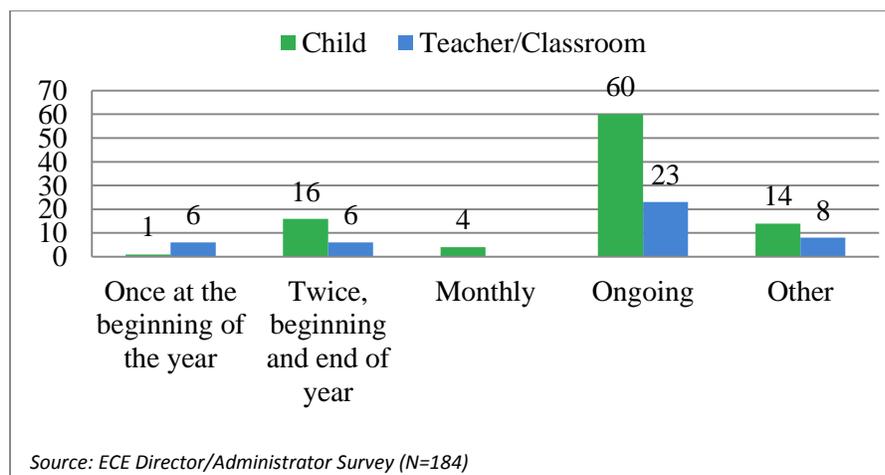
In addition to collecting data on individual child outcomes, the quality of the classroom environment should also be assessed, as outcomes are often affected by the quality of the child’s experiences in educational (and family) settings<sup>14</sup>. Classroom quality is often assessed through standardized classroom observations systems. This data is useful in identifying teachers’ strengths and weaknesses, developing meaningful professional development tailored to address those issues, for the purpose of evaluating programs.

Statewide, only Head Start has policies for conducting classroom assessments. Under the School Readiness Act, Head Start programs are federally mandated to conduct classroom observations for federal monitoring purposes utilizing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

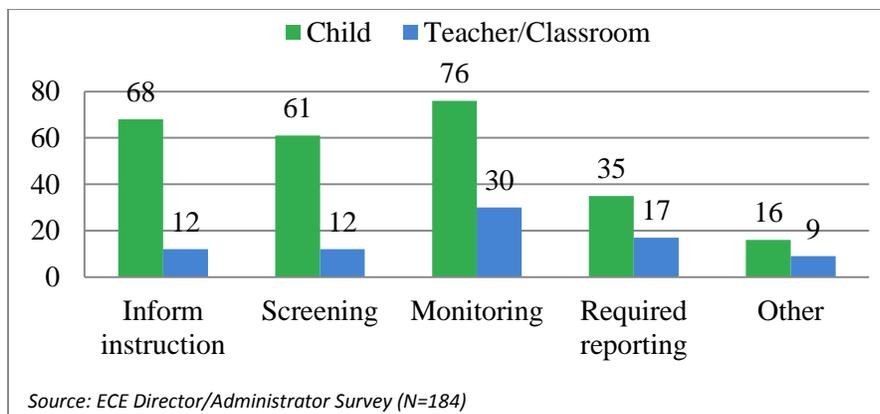
In this study, 46 (25%) of directors/administrators report collecting data on teacher or classroom performance (Figure 10). Of those collecting data, 11 (23%) use a published assessment. Those not utilizing a published assessment reported using a district/school developed tool or informal assessment. Additionally, classroom observations are most often conducted in an ongoing manner (Figure 11); and for multiple purposes; to inform instruction and monitoring purposes (Figure 12).



**Figure 10. Number of programs collecting data via assessments.**



**Figure 11. Assessment frequency.**



**Figure 12. Purpose for assessment.**

### ➤ Operating Schedule

Research examining the impact of duration of care on preschool-aged children found children who attended an extended-day, extended-year preschool program experienced greater improvement in mathematics and literacy scores compared to peers who attended half-day pre-k programs<sup>15</sup>. Numerous kindergarten studies have found that children who participated in full-day programs scored higher on standardized tests, had fewer grade retentions, demonstrated more consistent school attendance, and had fewer Title I placements than those who attended half-day or alternating day programs.<sup>16</sup>

Many states allow local early childhood programs to determine the length of the operating day, yearly schedule, and number of days offered per year. Often programs make these decisions based on budget constraints. Table 11 presents the average hours, days, and months per year programs operate in North Dakota as reported by ECE directors/administrators via the online survey in this study. According to directors/administrators, ND DHS licensed child care programs have the longest operating hours and days per week on average. ND DPI Districts and ND DHS Head Start programs on average operate only four days per week and follow the school year schedule. This is problematic, as parents in the current study indicated that on average they require care and education that covers a full-day work week. Some ND DPI Districts and ND DHS Head Start programs work in partnership with child care or other community-based organizations to provide wrap-around child care, but this is not always the case.

*“I want my 4 year old in an all-day preschool because my husband and I both work and we can't leave mid-day to transfer from preschool to daycare or vice versa. The daycare we do have is unreliable at times and it is impossible to find good drop-in backup.”*

~North Dakota Parent

**Table 11. ND ECE Programs Average Hours, Days, Months of Operation**

	Avg. Hours	Avg. Days	Avg. Months
<b>ND DPI Approved Pre-Kindergarten</b>	5	4	9
<b>ND DHS Head Start/Early Head Start</b>	6	4	9
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care Center</b>	11	5	12
<b>ND DHS Licensed Family Child Care Home</b>	10	5	12
<b>ND DHS Licensed Preschool*</b>	7	5	9
<b>ND DHS Licensed Group Child Care</b>	10	5	12
<b>ND DHS Multiple License</b>	11	5	12
<b>ND Parents are looking for...</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	

Source: ND ECE Director/Administrator Survey (N=184)

\*Licensed Preschools may only serve children 3 hours per day. The data reported here likely reflect providers who are operating double sessions in a single day.

### ➤ Teacher Qualifications

Well-trained, responsive, and effective teachers are essential to high quality ECE programs. Numerous studies have found that the educational attainment of ECE teachers and the specialized training they receive in early childhood education predict teaching quality, as well as children's learning and development<sup>17</sup>. The National Research Council (2001) recommends that, at a minimum, ECE teachers have a four-year college degree with specialized training in early childhood education<sup>18</sup>. In most states a high school diploma is sufficient to teach in a licensed child care center. As a result, many ECE teachers are not adequately prepared to be effective teachers. In general, public pre-kindergarten programs have higher educational qualification requirements than privately-run licensed centers.

National standards-based organizations such as NAEYC place requirements on teachers seeking accreditation<sup>19</sup>. Early childhood programs wishing to gain NAEYC accreditation must demonstrate that all lead teachers have a minimum of an associate's degree or equivalent. This NAEYC degree requirement is gradually increasing with the expectation that, by 2020, teachers have a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent in early childhood education, child development, elementary education, or early childhood special education. At the time of publication of this report, North Dakota had eight NAEYC accredited programs serving 828 children. Recently, Federal Head Start regulations became more stringent, dictating that lead teachers must have a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early education<sup>20</sup>. Depending on the setting, an ECE teacher/provider may hold a bachelor's degree or a high school diploma with some training in early childhood. Table 12 displays the requirements to teach in early care and education settings statewide.

**Table 12. North Dakota ECE Teacher Qualifications**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	Pre-kindergarten teachers must be <i>licensed</i> to teach by the Education Standards and Practices Board or <i>approved</i> to teach by the Education Standards and Practices Board and one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a major in elementary education and a kindergarten endorsement,</li> <li>b. have a major equivalency in elementary education and a kindergarten endorsement,</li> <li>c. have a major in elementary education and an early childhood education endorsement,</li> <li>d. have a major equivalency in elementary education and an early childhood education endorsement,</li> <li>e. have a major in early childhood education, or</li> <li>f. have a major equivalency in early childhood education.</li> </ol>
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	Follows federal requirements that at least 50% of Head Start teachers nationwide must have a bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's or advanced degree in any subject and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool age children.
<b>ND DHS Early HS</b>	Follows Head Start federal requirements that all Early HS teachers must have a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) and have been trained, or have the coursework equivalent in early childhood development with a focus on infants and toddlers.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	The ND DHS requires that all newly licensed family and group providers complete CCA Basic Child Care Training within the first three months of licensure. Family, group, and center staff members are required to complete Basic Child Care Training within the first three months of hire. The Basic Child Care Training is comprised of seven courses totaling 12 clock hours.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Preschool</b>	Licensed preschool teachers must meet one of the following qualifications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bachelor's degree with at least 8 semester hours or 12 quarter hours in early childhood education or child development.</li> <li>2. Teaching certificate in elementary education or kindergarten endorsement.</li> <li>3. An associate's degree in the field of early childhood education or child development.</li> <li>4. An associate's degree with one year of experience in a preschool or similar setting and one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. a. 8 semester hours or 12 quarter hours in early childhood education or child development.</li> <li>6. b. 120 hours of department-approved early childhood training.</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Current certification as a child development associate or similar status.</li> <li>8. Certification from a Montessori teacher training program.</li> </ol>

The percentage of early childhood teachers/providers statewide with a four-year degree or higher in early childhood education or any related field is presented in Table 13. ND DPI pre-kindergarten teachers are held to the same standards as K-12 teachers, and this is reflected with 100% of teachers with a four-year degree or higher. Head Start programs in North Dakota exceed federal requirements for teacher qualifications as 63% of teachers have a four-year degree or higher.

Information on child care teacher/provider credentials is only tracked via the Growing Futures (GF) Registry and collected on a voluntary basis. The GF Registry is a program of the ND DHS and is administered through a contract with CCA ND. The GF Registry is a statewide system of data collection, career development, and recognition that supports professionals in the field of early care and education by validating their professional and educational achievements. Most GF members represent licensed child care settings. As of March 2014, approximately 45% of licensed child care teachers/providers were enrolled in GF. Of these, 10% are classified in the professional pathway as having a four-year degree or higher.

Across all ECE programs in North Dakota fewer teachers have a four-year degree with a major in early childhood education (Table 13, third column). This is important to note given that research has shown that teachers/providers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create more high quality learning environments<sup>21</sup>.

**Table 13. ND ECE Teachers with a Four-Year Degree**

	Degree Major	
	ECE or Related field	ECE Only
<b>ND DPI Approved Pre-Kindergarten</b>	100%	14%
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	63%	38%
<b>Growing Futures members*</b>	10%	6%

\*Represents approximately 45% of the all licensed child care professionals in 2013.

Source: ND DPI STARS, 2013; Head Start PIR, 2012; ND GF registry, 2013

In this study, some directors/administrators in focus groups noted that teachers they hire with a four-year degree would benefit from additional training. The primary objectives of the current study did not include an assessment of the level of preparation or satisfaction with the preparation of ECE teachers in North Dakota. Additional investigation is needed to assess the quality, content, and alignment of teacher preparation programs in North Dakota to further ensure consistent coverage and preparation of early childhood teachers regardless of degree or credential type. Such a study should also ask employers' perceptions of teacher preparation.

### ➤ Professional Development

Professional development (PD) can serve as a way to equalize knowledge and skills across a workforce that has entered teaching without a common foundation of pre-service preparation. Thus, opportunities for staff to receive supportive supervision and to participate in ongoing high quality PD ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession's dynamic knowledge base. According to *A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Development*, a position statement proposed by NAEYC, formal PD is related to increased quality care; however,

experience without formal training has not been found to be related to increased quality care<sup>22</sup>. The most effective types of PD methods include content-based workshops as well as hands-on, one-on-one mentoring or coaching, also referred to as consultation. Additionally, research suggests a need to revitalize PD practices for early childhood professionals through innovative strategies<sup>23</sup>.

Table 14 provides the PD policies for early childhood agencies statewide. Currently all agencies require that early childhood teachers/providers participate in some form of ongoing PD or in-service training annually, however the content and type of PD is most often left to the program to decide.

**Table 14. ND ECE teacher professional development policies**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	North Dakota Administrative Rule 67.1-04-02-01 dictates requirements for professional development for licensure renewal. A new teacher receives a two-year license and no continuing education requirements. Once a teacher has earned 18 contracted teaching months, he or she receives the five-year license. A teacher must complete needs six continuing education units (CEU)/college credits (90 hours) over the course of the five-year license. CEUs must be documented on the teacher's college transcripts. The CEUs may be obtained through the school district if credit is provided through a state accredited university to provide the credit.
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	Head Start follows federal requirements that each Head Start teacher attend at least 15 clock hours of professional development per year. The professional development must be high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom focused. Additionally, the professional development shall be regularly evaluated by the program for effectiveness. Professional development may take place at a number of venues as long as the above requirements are met.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	All North Dakota licensed child care teachers/provider are required to complete a 12-hour Basic Child Care course within the first three months of becoming licensed/employed. Licensed child care teachers/provider must complete a minimum number of approved training hours annually. The number of training clock hours needed depends on license type and number of hours worked.

In the current study 149 (82%) of directors/administrators on the online survey reported that teachers have opportunities to engage in PD. Most frequently directors/administrators reported that professional development is delivered as single/multi-day workshops or trainings or online learning options. However, survey responses represent a small sample of all directors/administrators statewide and rely on self-report. Given that PD is a costly investment for programs, future studies should assess the content and format of PD statewide to better understand how it translates to teacher effectiveness. To answer basic questions about the effectiveness of PD statewide, a state-level ECE workforce data system is necessary. Currently, the GF Registry serves this purpose on a voluntary basis but represents primarily licensed child care. Therefore a comprehensive understanding of statewide workforce preparation is not available at this time.

### Embedded Professional Development: Coaching

Research shows that PD that involves coaching is more effective in changing teaching practices<sup>24</sup>. A national multi-state evaluation on coaching as a method of PD concluded that on-site consultation resulted in improvements for both center-based care as well as family child care. Coaching in early childhood is defined as “a particular type of help giving practice within a capacity building model to support people in using existing abilities and developing new skills”<sup>25</sup>. As part of early childhood practices, coaching promotes self-reflection and refinement of current practices on the part of the person being coached<sup>26</sup>. Table 15 presents policies across ND ECE programs on coaching and mentoring.

**Table 15. ND ECE program policies on coaching and mentoring**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	School districts make decisions on how local funds should be used, and that may or may not include coaching for pre-kindergarten teachers.
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	Head Start performance standards utilize Mentor Teachers who are responsible for observing and assessing the classroom activities of a Head Start program and providing on-the-job guidance and training to the Head Start program staff and volunteers. The intent of these activities is to improve the qualifications and training of classroom staff, to maintain high quality education services, and promote career development.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	Formal coaching or mentoring is provided by ND DHS through a contract with CCA ND. Additionally, programs participating in Bright and Early North Dakota are eligible for coaching at different quality levels.

In this study, less than half of directors (42%) reported that teachers receive some form of coaching or mentoring. Of those reporting that coaching is provided, most often it is provided via observation with feedback delivered face to face.

Access to coaching does not assume effective coaching. In order for coaching to be effective, several studies have shown that coaches need training and clarity of roles and responsibilities<sup>27</sup>. The current study did not evaluate coaching topics. Future studies should assess the quality of the coaching teachers/providers receive given research suggests that not all coaching is effective.

### Process Quality

Process Quality involves interaction among individuals. Process quality entails active teacher/provider involvement with children activities that support learning and development. It also includes interactions between children (child-child interactions) or between adults (adult-adult interactions), including parents and teachers.

#### ➤ Teacher-child Interactions

Certain teacher behaviors are associated with higher program quality and improved outcomes for young children. These behaviors include child-centered teaching, encouragement, responsive verbal interactions, sensitivity to children’s cues, and the promotion of positive, pro-social behaviors<sup>28</sup>.

One widely accepted measure of teacher-child interactions is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The CLASS is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in center-based preschool classrooms<sup>29</sup>. CLASS includes three domains of teacher-child interactions that support children's learning and development: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Within each domain are dimensions which capture more specific details about teachers' interactions with children.

In this study, 46 (25%) of directors/administrators reported collecting data on teacher or classroom performance. Just over half (56%) reported using a district/school locally developed tool or informal assessment; because of the variances it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which teacher-child interactions are actually monitored statewide. Only participants identifying themselves as Head Start Directors on the online survey reported utilizing the CLASS to assess teacher-child interactions. Table 16 presents North Dakota Head Start CLASS averages by domain for seven of the 14 programs in 2012 and 2013. These scores exceed national averages and are overall indicative of effective teacher-child interactions.

**Table 16. CLASS Scores for ND DHS Head Start Programs 2012-2013**

Class Domain	Average	What do the scores represent?
<b>Emotional Support</b>	6.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1-2</b> means the quality of teacher-child interactions is low. Classrooms in which there is poor management of behavior, teaching that is purely rote, or that lack interaction.</li> <li>• <b>3-5</b> means classrooms show a mix of effective interactions with periods when interactions are not effective or are absent.</li> <li>• <b>6-7</b> means that effective teacher-child interactions are consistently observed throughout the observation period.</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	5.94	
<b>Instructional Support</b>	3.13	

*Data source: Head Start 2012 and 2013 CLASS reports (N = 7)*

### ➤ Family Partnerships

Young children's families play an integral role in shaping their learning and development. Consequently, early care and education programs engaging parents as partners in their children's education is an essential support to children's learning. ECE programs that have family partnership components have demonstrated increase school success<sup>30</sup>. Table 17 provides information on policies across ND ECE programs regarding family engagement.

**Table 17. ND ECE program family partnership policies**

<b>ND DPI Approved Pre- Kindergarten</b>	School districts partner with North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service, and the statewide network of Parent Resource Centers to operate the <i>Gearing Up for Kindergarten</i> program to provide families with an intensive educational experience that combines early learning activities for pre-kindergarten children with parent education opportunities. In 2012-2013 the program operated at 64 sites across North Dakota with 870 families enrolled. School districts also follow Title I and Special Education parent involvement regulations.
<b>ND DHS Head Start</b>	Head Start programs have a long history of engaging parents in their children's learning and are required to follow performance standards that broadly outline the ways in which parents should be engaged. Parent and family engagement in HS and Early HS is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parents and children.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Child Care</b>	Directors must communicate with parents about their child and any concerns about the health, development, or behavior of the child. Directors must also provide parents with progress reports upon request, and provide unlimited access to observe their child while in care.
<b>ND DHS Licensed Preschool</b>	Directors must provide parents with information concerning the program, its activities, and the child's adjustment to the program.

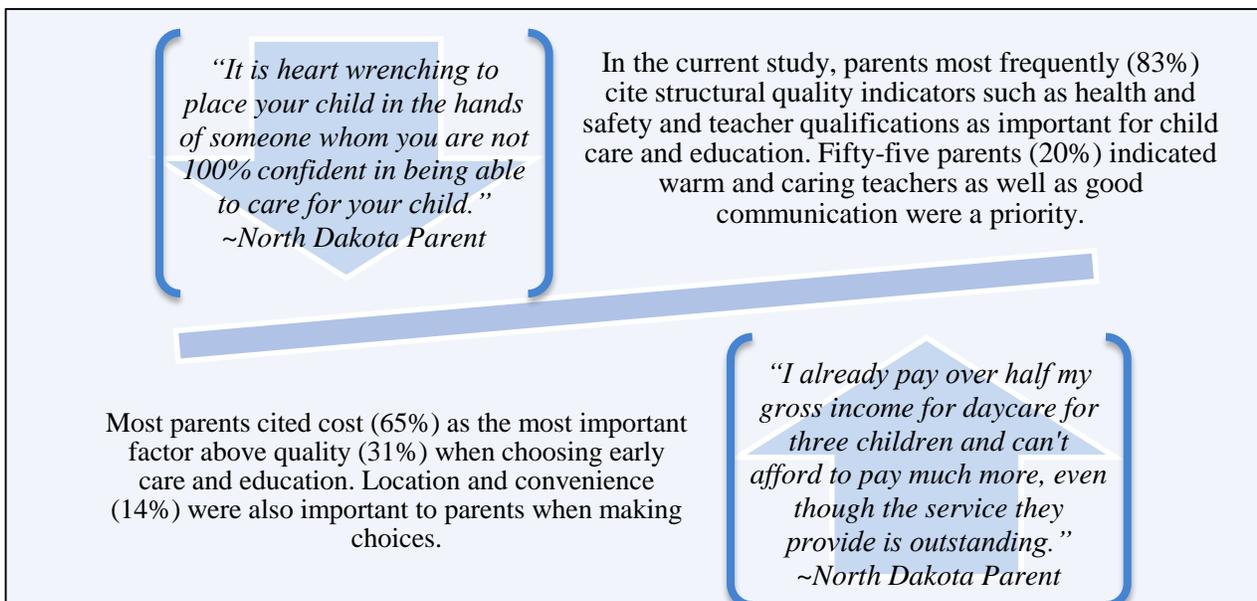
In the current study, 104 (58%) directors/administrators responding to the online survey indicated that they engage in partnerships with families. Based on survey responses, ECE programs across all settings provide some form of family engagement regardless of whether or not they are required. Most often programs sponsor parent nights or parent-teacher conferences as opportunities to share children's learning and development process. Many programs also sponsor special events centered on holidays or other special occasions such as children's birthdays. Still others provide training or workshops for families based on requests or relevant early childhood topics.

#### ➤ **Community Partnerships**

Effective programs also establish and maintain relationships with community agencies and institutions that can support children's development. Additionally, connections with community partners allow ECE programs to connect families with resources to which they may not otherwise have access. In the current study, 41 (23%) directors/administrators indicated in the online survey that they engage in partnerships with the community. Formal policies regarding community partnerships are not provided by ND DHS or ND DPI; however, Head Start follows federal guidance on community engagement strategies as outlined in the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework<sup>31</sup>.

### *Parent Preferences and Priorities for Selecting Care*

In this study parents indicated that finding and affording child care and education is especially difficult for single parents, families of children with special needs, parents who work nontraditional hours (i.e., evenings, nights and weekends), and low-income families. When parents in North Dakota have the luxury to compare ECE programs, factors such as cost and location often outweigh quality (Figure 13). This is consistent with national studies that have found availability, accessibility, affordability, and parental awareness of supply as parents' priorities for child care.<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 13. ND parents' reasons for choosing child care.** Source: Parent Survey (N=285)

### **Review of Objective 2. Indicators and Assessments to Evaluate Quality**

Increasing access to early care and education without ensuring those programs are of high quality is a missed opportunity to enrich and accelerate early learning. Mounting evidence shows that the quality of early care and education environments impacts children's development as well as economic development for the state.

- ND DHS licensed child care, ND DHS Head Start, and ND DPI Pre-K, all have varying degrees of quality standards and monitoring.
- Teacher-child interactions, one of the most predictive indicators of quality, are currently only assessed by ND DHS Head Start programs in North Dakota.
- Across early childhood care and education settings few teachers/providers have a four-year degree with a major in early childhood education.
- Parents are looking for care and education options for a full work week (40 hours), however most ND DHS Head Start and ND DPI Pre-K classrooms only offer part-day and/or part-week care. This impacts families' economic stability, as it is difficult for parents to find wrap-around care, alternative education options, and transportation for children to these locations.
- Parents want and value quality in an early care and education program, but ultimately the availability and costs of care and education limit their choices and the opportunities they can provide for their children.

### OBJECTIVE 3. COSTS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Federal funding for early childhood programs has fluctuated from \$33 billion in 2009 to an estimated \$21.5 billion in fiscal year 2013<sup>32</sup>. Federal budget cuts in 2013 across all programs resulted in, among other negative consequences, pre-kindergarten teacher layoffs and sequestration for Head Start programs. Decreased federal funding has required states have had to fill funding gaps in order to sustain services and to meet the needs of families. In North Dakota a 5% cut in funding during the sequestration resulted in elimination of services for up to 166 families and children ages 0 to 5 (Table 18). Additionally, school districts with a Pre-K classroom experienced federal funding losses from federal Title I and Program Improvement funds impacting program availability and implementation (Table 19).

**Table 18. Impact of 2013 sequestration on ND DHS HS/Early HS families and funding**

	Number of families cut	Funding lost
<b>Head Start</b>	135 to 148	\$919,443
<b>Early Head Start</b>	18	\$237,413

**Table 19. Funding loss to Title I and Program Improvement for ND DPI Pre-K**

	2010-2011	2011-2012	Loss
<b>Title I</b>	\$404,393.59	\$356,523.81	\$47,869.78
<b>Title I Program Improvement</b>	\$158,963.93	\$52,185.81	\$106,778.12

### Operational Costs

Early care and education is highly labor intensive. Up to 80% of the cost in an early care and education program is for staff or payroll related expenses.<sup>49</sup> Structural and process quality factors affect the cost associated with running early care and education programs. Programs may make compromises in an effort to balance what parents can likely afford with financial considerations regarding the quality of the program.

- **Class/Group Size** – A smaller class/group size is better for children’s development, but more children in a class/group results in higher revenue for the program.
- **Ratio** – One adult who is responsible for a smaller number of children allows children to receive more individualized attention, but maintaining low adult-to-child ratios requires hiring and paying more staff.
- **Personnel Education and Training** – Higher qualified teachers are ideal, but salaries increase with experience and advanced degrees.
- **Square Footage** – Sufficient indoor and outdoor space for each child is required, but also limits the maximum program capacity.
- **Activities and Materials** – Providing a curriculum and diverse materials and learning activities help promote children’s learning and readiness for school, but implementation requires teacher/provider training and incurs additional program expenses.
- **Health, Safety and Nutrition** – Health and safety practices protect children, but these practices require provider training and incur additional expenses.

**Limitations of Collecting Operational Costs in the Current Study**

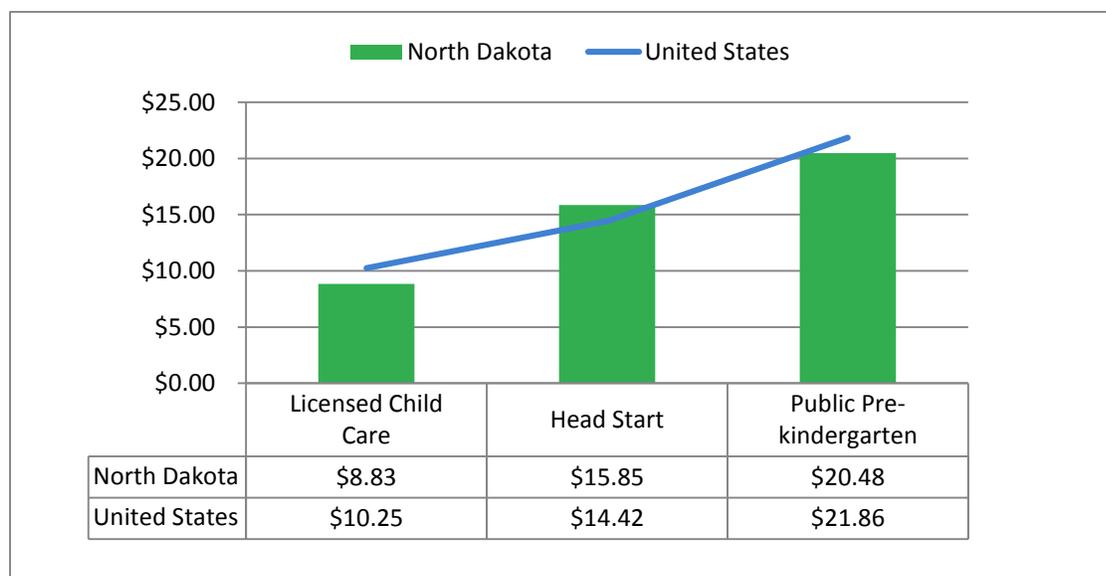
A significant limitation to providing accurate cost per child estimates is the availability of accurate operational cost and enrollment data for ND ECE programs. The current study is not able to provide these estimates, because detailed budget information on operating costs is not systematically collected for licensed and unlicensed child care or ND DPI Pre-K classrooms. ND DPI Pre-K classroom budgets are not required to be reported separate from the overall school or district budget, making it challenging to provide an accurate operational cost.

**➤ Teacher/Provider Compensation**

As previously mentioned, labor costs are one of the largest portions of an ECE program’s budget. Early childhood education is one of the lowest paying professional fields. Low wages and benefits impact the quality of care and education, via high turnover and minimal educational requirements<sup>33</sup>. Nationally, early childhood programs operated by public school districts pay pre-kindergarten teachers on the same pay scale as K-12 teachers, and hold them to similar bachelor’s degree requirements. Head Start teacher qualifications are also increasing, with 62% nationally holding a bachelor’s degree as of 2012.

When comparing entry level ECE teacher/provider compensation, ND DPI and ND DHS Head Start teacher salaries are more aligned with national averages than licensed child care teachers/providers salaries (Figure 14). This is likely due to differing credential and experience requirements for teachers/providers across agencies. North Dakota entry level licensed child care teachers/providers in 2012 were earning on average less than \$9 per hour which for a family of four is barely above the federal poverty guidelines.

*“They enjoy their job, but when it comes down to an opening where they’re getting paid almost double for the same work, they take it.”*  
 ~North Dakota ECE Director/Administrator



**Figure 14. ND ECE Teacher/provider average entry level hourly wage.**

Source: ND DPI Salary scale 2013; NDCCA Salary Survey, 2012; ND HS Salary Comparison, 2013

### Hiring & Retaining Qualified Teachers

Recruiting and retaining good teachers is one of the most significant factors impacting quality in early childhood programs nationwide<sup>34</sup>. Studies suggest that the link between compensation and teacher qualifications, behaviors, morale, and turnover explain the relation to quality. If early childhood professionals earned salaries comparable to those with similar levels of educational attainment, the additional costs would reduce program affordability. In order to operate an affordable program within their funding constraints, programs often pay low wages and provide limited benefits, which in turn makes it challenging to recruit and retain qualified staff.

In this study, directors/administrators explained lowering expectations in order to fill staff vacancies. One director/administrator noted that they dropped the early childhood education experience requirement to a “preferred” qualification in order to increase the number of applicants. Directors/administrators also noted that competing with increased wages statewide makes it difficult to attract and retain teachers.

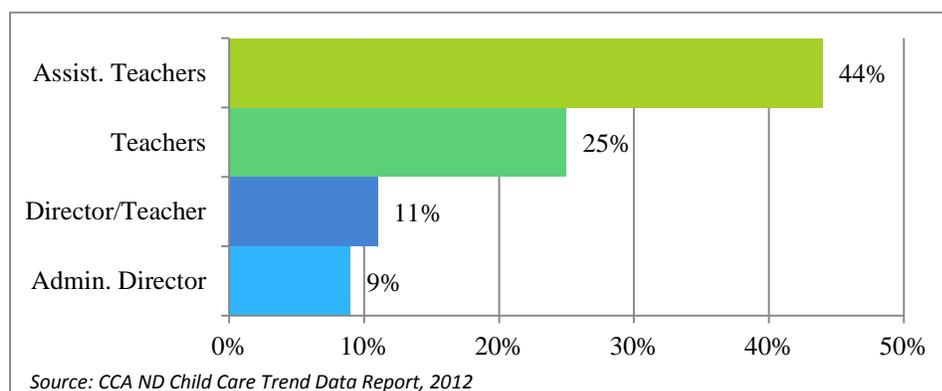
*“... I train people to serve the hardest kids in the community. They work for me for two years or three years and then they have to leave because they can work somewhere else for \$15.00 an hour and it takes ‘em three years to make \$9.00 an hour ...”*  
~North Dakota ECE Director/Administrator

Early childhood teacher/provider turnover is high relative to other professions, and teacher assistant turnover is even higher. Annual turnover rates of 25% to 50% are common for preschool teachers. By comparison, the annual turnover rate for public school teachers is less than 7%. Turnover is directly related to teacher compensation, and programs with the lowest pay have the highest turnover. Teachers in public preschool programs who are compensated similar to the public school teacher average have turnover rates comparable to that of other public school teachers<sup>35</sup>.

Annually, teacher turnover results in both direct and indirect costs for programs. With each turnover a program spends funds on additional recruitment, selection, and new staff training. Indirectly, workloads for remaining staff may increase to cover losses, resulting in overtime and reduced productivity both tied with low morale. Nationally, estimated costs vary from as low as a few hundred dollars to as high as four times the annual salary of the employee<sup>36</sup>. One North Dakota ECE director estimated that the current turnover rates are costing their program thousands annually. For example, directors/administrators noted that finding teaching assistants with a Child Development Associate credential is difficult; because of this they must resort to hiring staff without the credential. Programs then pay for the new employee’s training, often to have that employee quit within the year.

*I’m really struggling even in our area where the other jobs in the area maybe don’t pay as high as the western part of the state. We’ve recently had a new retailer come into town – starting wage over \$14.00 an hour – with benefits, and you know basically you could be 16 years old and be doing that. So I’m struggling just to keep non-educated staff let alone recruiting and retaining educated staff, and there’s – I have no ability to pay, you know, even double digits a lot of times for full-time staff.*  
~North Dakota ECE Director/Administrator

A 2012 report published by CCA ND found the turnover of teachers and assistant teachers was 25% and 44%, respectively (Figure 15). Consequently, it is likely that a quarter of the child care providers that parents see at the beginning of the year will not be there at the end of the year. In the current study, ND directors/administrators indicated turnover to be as high as 40-50% for assistant teachers, slightly less for teachers. Such high turnover has profound impact on children's healthy growth and development. Continuity of care involves consistent teacher-child relationships across the infant, toddler, and preschool years with as few transitions as possible. This is a factor in closing the achievement gap, especially for at-risk children. Research demonstrates that children have better educational and developmental outcomes when they have continuity in their education and care arrangements<sup>37</sup>.



**Figure 15. ND DHS licensed child care teacher turnover.**

### ➤ Intangible Costs

Early care and education directors/administrators wear many hats throughout their day. They are caregivers and teachers, as well as small business owners, cooks, and economic development partners. They serve as substitute teachers, shop for groceries, run payroll, drive the bus, and prepare materials. In this study, 43% of directors/administrators, or 77 respondents across all settings, indicated there are intangible costs that cannot be accounted for on a budget sheet. Primarily directors/administrators cited filling multiple roles in classrooms/programs and working well beyond a 40 hour work week. It is difficult to put a monetary value on the intangible costs of operating an early care and education program; however, it is likely they are significant. If staff earned a salary that properly reflects the duties they perform, it is likely the costs would be too high for many parents and program budgets.

### Funding Sources

Because a single federal or state funding source may not adequately address program requirements or standards, programs must maximize public and private sector investments by using funds from two or more funding streams, such as Early Head Start, Head Start, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF-also called Child Care Assistance or Child Care Subsidy), Title I, IDEA, community resources, other grants, and local district funding.

North Dakota early care and education programs access federal, state, and local funding to operate their programs or provide services. In this study, 51 (28%) directors/administrators indicated that they use at least two different sources of funding (state, federal, or local) to operate their program. NDCC 15.1-37-01(2) dictates that general education children

enrolled in ND DPI pre-kindergarten programs are not included in the state per-pupil education funding formula; thus school districts do not receive state funding for these students. Districts, therefore, must fund classrooms from a combination of sources including local revenue, federal funding provided under Title I or IDEA, Part B, tuition, and, in some cases, community fundraising efforts. Table 20 presents funding sources utilized by ND ECE directors/administrators for the purpose of funding program operations and services.

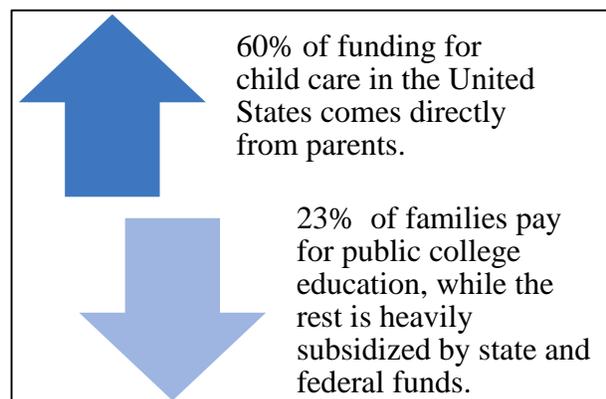
**Table 20. Funding sources accessed by ND ECE programs**

Funding Level	Administrative Agency
<b>Federal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Department of Health and Human Services                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Head Start/Early Head Start</li> <li>○ Child Care subsidies (CCDF, TANF, Block Grant)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• U.S. Department of Education                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title I</li> <li>○ IDEA, Part B</li> </ul> </li> <li>• U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Program</li> </ul>
<b>State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Dakota Department of Public Instruction                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Early Childhood Environment Grants to eligible entities, including community-based organizations to expand or enhance new ECE environments</li> <li>○ Early Childhood Continuing Education Grants to support individuals working in school districts, childcare and/or Head Start to obtain a CDA, AA, or BA in ECE.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• North Dakota Department of Human Services                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funds are appropriated for workforce development, quality enhancement and capacity building. Funding provides training, technical assistance and financial incentives to early childhood service providers licensed by DHS.</li> <li>○ Inclusion Support Program provides technical assistance and grants to early childhood service providers who care for children with special needs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• North Dakota Department of Commerce                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child Care Grants to assist in the expansion of creation of child care facilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District and School</li> <li>• Local agencies such as United Way or faith-based organizations</li> <li>• Local fundraising</li> <li>• Tuition</li> </ul>

### Cost of Early Care and Education

Depending on the funding source, child care and early education programs vary in the expenses parents are responsible for<sup>38</sup>. In the current study, 88% of North Dakota parents indicated that they will pay for early care and education entirely out of pocket. As previously discussed, North Dakota has one of the highest percentages of children ages 0 to 5 with both parents in the workforce, making high quality and affordable care and education necessary. ND DPI Pre-K funding is generally spread across a combination of local, state, federal, and parent dollars. The tuition amount ND DPI districts charge parents for Pre-K classrooms varies and is not reported. Families enrolled in Head Start programs whom meet income qualifications do not pay for services. However, Head Start programs may enroll up to 10% of children from families that exceed the low-income guidelines, but who meet program selection criteria and who would benefit from Head Start program services.

As previously discussed, families paying out of pocket is the primary source of funding for licensed child care programs in North Dakota. The average cost of infant care in North Dakota at a center increased in 2013 to \$8,300 annually, a 3% increase from 2012. While growth in median income has outpaced the average cost of child care, inevitably not all parents in North Dakota have seen increases in their incomes to keep up with the cost of living. Parents in the current study ranked affordability as their top factor in choosing child care and the second barrier, behind availability, to accessing child care. Table 1 in Appendix F presents the percentage of the median income that parents pay for licensed child care according to age group and setting for each county. In thirty-three North Dakota counties parents pay more than 10% of the median income for licensed child care. Ten percent of family income for child care is considered affordable by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services<sup>39</sup>. Costs are greatest for infant/toddler child care settings and preschool child care centers.

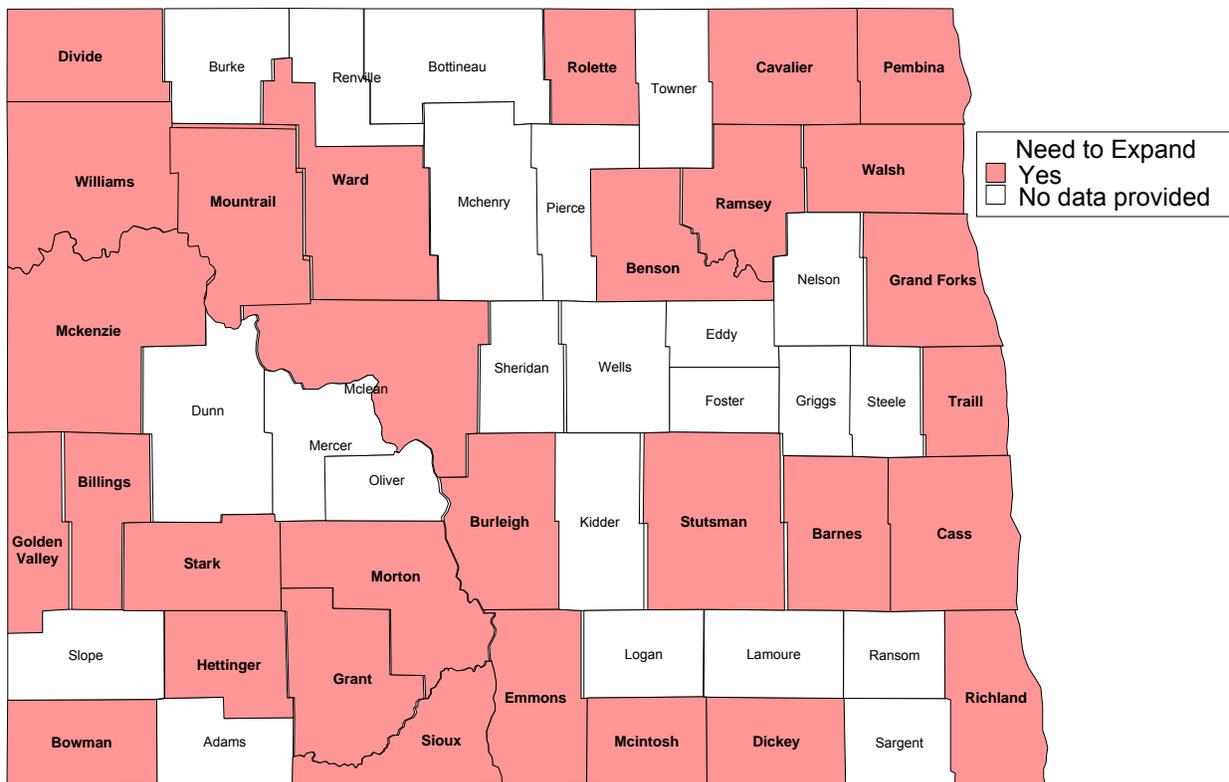


**National estimates families pay for child care and college<sup>1</sup>.**

*"We live paycheck to paycheck but don't qualify for any assistance, which really puts a strain on our family and our budget."  
~ North Dakota Parent*

### Need to Expand or Create Facilities

As discussed in Objective 1, rapid population growth statewide has resulted in gaps in early childhood care and education in North Dakota. In this study, 72 (40%) directors/administrators indicated they currently have a need to expand or to create facilities and provide services to meet demand in their area. This represents thirty different counties in North Dakota (Figure 16). Most noted the need to serve more children and that doing this would require creating new space and hiring additional staff. However, it should be noted that directors/administrators responding on the online survey did not represent all counties; therefore, it is possible the need to expand is much greater.



**Figure 16. Counties where at least one director/administrator indicated a need to expand or to create new facilities.**

Source: EC Director/Administrator Survey (N=184)

When asked about the highest spending priorities if additional resources were available, nearly 50% of directors/administrators said their first priority would be to increase building space and to hire more staff or pay current staff better wages. These priorities were followed by increasing program quality via additional classroom materials and improving facilities, including outdoor play equipment.

*“Well, my building is old; but I could easily start a second site. But I’m not going to now ‘cause there’s no way I can find staff. I mean I could find the kids, but I won’t find staff or the money to be able to support it. But I could easily open up a second site.”*  
 ~ ND ECE Director/Administrator

### Review of Objective 3. Costs and Future Needs

Federal funding for ECE programs has fluctuated from \$33 billion in fiscal year 2009 to an estimated \$21.5 billion in fiscal year 2013. Decreased federal funding has required states to fill these funding gaps in order to meet the needs of families.

- In North Dakota a 5% cut in federal funding during the 2013 sequestration resulted in the loss of services of up to 166 families and children ages 0 to 5.
- Federal funding cuts, combined with economic growth in other industries statewide, has impacted the ability of ND ECE programs to pay teachers/providers competitive wages.
- ND ECE teachers/providers are paid on a wide scale according to program setting and qualifications. ND ECE directors/administrators cited increasing wages as one of the top priorities if additional resources were available.
- Hiring and retaining quality teachers is one of the biggest barriers to quality in North Dakota early care and education classrooms. The turnover rate in licensed child care settings is as high as 25%. Consequently, a quarter of all parents will see a different teacher in their child's classroom at the end of the year.
- 47% of ND ECE directors/administrators indicated a need to expand or create new facilities to meet the demand in their area. Counties that have seen the largest population growth in ages 0 to 5 have the greatest need to expand.
- In 33 counties parents pay more than 10% of the median income for licensed child care. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers 10% or less affordable for child care<sup>40</sup>. Costs for North Dakota families are greatest for infant/toddler child care settings and preschool child care centers.
- Parents want quality in an early care and education program, but the availability and affordability of care and education limit their choices and the opportunities they can provide for their children.

# North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Summary

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The North Dakota 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly enacted Senate Bill 2229, stating that the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall study the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in the State of North Dakota. The North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Study Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as the Advisory Committee) representing child care providers, Head Start, higher education, public and private school districts, special education, advocacy groups, and state departments – including the Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI), Department of Human Services (ND DHS), Information Technology, Commerce, and the Governor’s Office – guided this work.

The purpose of this report and its findings is to bring to the surface areas of need and improvement in child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs. Additionally, this report should serve as an impetus for further research in this field, so policy makers can make well-informed policy decisions. Such decisions have the potential to improve the early childhood education system in North Dakota, so all of North Dakota’s children have opportunities for a brighter future.

## **Study Limitations**

The findings of this study represent a snapshot of access, quality, and costs of early care and education in North Dakota based on available data. It is important to understand the limitations to the currently available data that constrain the study recommendations. There was a limited sample size for primary data collection (surveys, Excel data requests, focus groups). In particular, low response rates from licensed child care and ND DPI Pre-K classrooms made it difficult to estimate operating costs for these settings as this data is not currently available from a source other than directors and administrators themselves. Evidence collected from a limited sample is not sufficient to draw evaluative conclusions. Given these data limitations, an examination of early care and education needs over the next 10-20 years was not possible. As appropriate, primary data were interpreted in conjunction with existing secondary data collected from ND DHS, ND DPI, and ND Head Start. However, as noted throughout, the availability and consistency of data from state agencies was also limited. In general, the evaluation team encountered instances where data collection and reporting to state agencies could be improved to yield more reliable and valid study conclusions.

Recommendations for development of an improved data system are provided in the following summary. Considering the previously mentioned data limitations, the study recommendations primarily call for additional investigation as well as improved data collection to be able to provide more conclusive and reliable findings.

## Review of Objectives

A review of the data for each of the three study objectives is provided below.

### OBJECTIVE 1. DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY, AND ADMINISTRATION

- Approximately 49% of all children ages 0 to 5 with both parents working are enrolled in a ND DPI school district pre-kindergarten classroom, ND DHS Head Start/Early Head Start, or ND DHS licensed child care setting.
- The remaining 51% of all children ages 0 to 5 are being cared for in a registered or unregistered unlicensed setting, or by friend, family, and neighbor care that typically receives no monitoring.
- ECE directors/administrators and parents that participated in the current study indicated that 1,777 children ages 0 to 5 are on a wait list for a care and education program. It should be noted that data collected via the online survey and data request were both self-reported and only represent a snap shot in time as wait list numbers are dynamic.
- If this current level of access continues, this means that approximately 20,576 children ages 0 to 5 may enter kindergarten over the next five years without any formal early learning experience.

### OBJECTIVE 2. INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS TO EVALUATE QUALITY

- ND DHS licensed child care, ND DHS Head Start, and ND DPI Pre-K, all have varying degrees of quality standards and monitoring.
- Teacher-child interactions, one of the most predictive indicators of quality, are currently only assessed by ND DHS Head Start programs in North Dakota.
- Across early childhood care and education settings few teachers/providers have a four-year degree with a major in early childhood education.
- Parents are looking for care and education options for a full work week (40 hours); however, most ND DHS Head Start and ND DPI Pre-K classrooms only offer part-day and/or part-week care. This impacts families' economic stability, as it is difficult for parents to find wrap-around care, alternative education options, and transportation for children to these locations.
- Parents want and value quality in an early care and education program, but ultimately the availability and costs of care and education limit their choices and the opportunities they can provide for their children.

### OBJECTIVE 3. COSTS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- In North Dakota a 5% cut in federal funding during the 2013 sequestration resulted in the loss of services to up to 166 families and children ages 0 to 5.
- Federal funding cuts, combined with economic growth in other industries statewide has impacted the ability of ND ECE programs to pay teachers/providers competitive wages.
- ND ECE teachers/providers are paid on a wide scale according to program setting and qualifications. ND ECE directors/administrators cited increasing wages as one of the top priorities if additional resources were available.
- Hiring and retaining quality teachers is one of the biggest barriers to quality in North Dakota early care and education classrooms. The turnover rate in licensed child care

settings is as high as 25%. Consequently, a quarter of all parents will see a different teacher in their child's classroom at the end of the year.

- 47% of ND ECE directors/administrators indicated a need to expand or create new facilities to meet the demand in their area. Counties that have seen the largest population growth in ages 0 to 5 have the greatest need to expand.
- In 33 counties parents pay more than 10% of the median income for licensed child care. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers 10% or less affordable for child care<sup>41</sup>. Costs for North Dakota families are greatest for infant/toddler child care settings and preschool child care centers.
- Parents want quality in an early care and education program, but the availability and affordability of care and education limit their choices and the opportunities they can provide for their children.

## Findings

### ***Finding: North Dakota ECE options do not meet demand.***

- 73% (35,573) of children ages 0 to 5 live in households with both parents working. These parents need access to reliable care and education options in order to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity at work.
- On average, parents in the current study are looking for care and education options for a full 5-day work week (40 hours); however, on average ND DHS Head Start and ND DPI Pre-K classrooms only offer part-day and/or part-week care. This impacts families' economic stability, as it is difficult for parents to find wrap-around care, alternative education options, and the capability to transport their children to multiple locations.
- Approximately 49% of all children ages 0 to 5 with both parents working are enrolled in a ND DPI District Pre-K classroom, ND DHS HS, or ND DHS licensed child care. The remaining 51% are being cared for in a registered unlicensed setting or by friend, family, and neighbor care that typically receive no monitoring.
- ECE directors/administrators and parents in this study indicated that 1,777 children ages 0 to 5 are on a wait-list for an early care and education program.
- Additionally, 47% of ECE directors/administrators indicated the need for additional funding to expand or create new facilities to serve demand in their area.
- Parents want quality, but the availability and costs of care and education limit their choices and the opportunities they can provide for their children.

**What this means:** If this current level of access continues, approximately 20,576 children may enter kindergarten over the next five years without any formal early learning experience. Children are missing out on high quality early care and education opportunities that are critical for school readiness and later school success.

### ***Finding: North Dakota ECE programs do not consistently monitor quality.***

- The degrees to which quality standards are monitored vary greatly between early care and education programs.
- Program, classroom, and child assessments are needed to document and guide improvement in program quality and effectiveness. In this study 53% of directors/administrators reported using an assessment to collect data on child performance and 25% reported collecting data on teacher or classroom performance. Of these, few used a published assessment. Those not utilizing a published assessment reported using a district/school developed tool or informal assessment.
- Teacher-child interactions, one of the most predictive indicators of quality, are currently only assessed by ND DHS HS programs.
- Currently, there is not a statewide system in place to collect data on quality standards from all early care and education programs.

**What this means:** Without ongoing assessment of program quality and child outcomes, it is not possible to ensure a consistent level of high quality and developmentally appropriate early learning opportunities across all early childhood programs and settings. Additionally, such assessments are necessary to make conclusions about the effectiveness of programs.

***Finding: Hiring and retaining quality teachers and child care providers is one of the biggest barriers to quality in North Dakota early care and education classrooms.***

- Across early childhood care and education settings, few teachers and providers have a four-year degree with a major in early childhood education.
- The turnover rate in ND DHS licensed child care settings is as high as 25%, meaning a quarter of all parents will see a different teacher in their child's classroom by the end of the year.
- In North Dakota, a 5% cut in federal funding during the 2013 sequestration resulted in the loss of services and staff that served up to 166 families and children ages 0 to 5. Federal funding cuts combined with economic growth in other industries statewide has impacted the ability of North Dakota ECE programs to pay teachers and providers competitive wages.

**What this means:** Children in North Dakota have little access to teachers with specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education. Teachers without this specific preparation are less likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer rich language experiences, or create high quality learning environments.

***Finding: North Dakota does not have a tool for consistent and reliable data collection of early childhood data to link to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.***

- The availability and consistency of data collected by state agencies to address objectives in the current study was limited.
- Accurate child enrollment, child demographics, professional development, and teacher and provider credential data is not consistently collected across programs to answer basic questions such as number of children served, types of professional development delivered to teacher and providers, or qualifications teachers and providers hold.
- Additionally, financial data is not currently collected in a manner to make determination of costs per child or costs of operating a quality early care and education program.

**What this means:** Positive child outcomes are the ultimate objective of early care and education, and this requires proper management of data and information and knowledge assets to make informed, accurate, and timely policy and resource decisions. Without valid and reliable data, understanding the effectiveness of programs, advancing quality, and distribution of resources to accomplish these goals is not possible.

***Finding: North Dakota does not have a state plan to develop a comprehensive early childhood care and education system.***

- North Dakota has an informal early childhood system of public and private early care and education programs and services, administered by early childhood administrators across multiple agencies.
- Multiple state-level initiatives are currently underway to address early care and education needs, though they are uncoordinated and limited in scope.

**What this means:** Without a statewide coordinated approach to early care and education, policy and funding decisions will not be made in a strategic and data-driven manner.

## Recommendations

Based on our analysis of the available data and review of research, the Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy at the University of Denver offers the following recommendations for consideration by the North Dakota Legislative Council to increase the access and quality of early childhood care and education in North Dakota. In alignment with NDCC 15.10-37 outlining the duties of the Early Childhood Governor’s Council, recommendations in the current study are organized into short-term and long-term strategies. Short-term recommendations should be considered as strategies that can be enacted immediately due to ease of implementation and stakeholder support. Long-term recommendations may take more time to implement and necessitate the completion of short-term strategies. It should be noted, however, that the order of the recommendations presented does not imply order of importance. All recommendations should be considered as efforts necessary to develop a coordinated early care and education system.

### **Finding: North Dakota ECE options do not meet demand.**

<i>Recommendations</i>	
<b>Short-term: Develop an early care and education funding plan.</b>	<b>Long-term: Implement the early care and education funding plan.</b>
It is recommended that members of the current Advisory Committee form a sub-committee to develop a funding plan for early care and education programs that is linked to quality and monitoring. The patchwork of early care and education programs available for North Dakota infants, toddlers, and preschoolers fails to meet current demand with the current level of funding. North Dakota does not have a state funding plan to support early childhood care and education, necessitating the need to develop a plan that is based on data and includes collaborative solutions to blend and braid resources more effectively and align eligibility and program standards. The plan should be reported to the Early Childhood Governor’s Council and North Dakota Legislative Council with recommendations for funding early care and education to meet demand.	It is recommended that the North Dakota early care and education funding plan be implemented to ensure all young children have equitable access to high quality early care and education opportunities. The funding plan should be continually monitored as North Dakota continues to grow and the demand for early care and education increases. Finally, all funding allocations should be tied to collection of data to ensure resources are effectively distributed.

**Finding: North Dakota ECE programs do not consistently monitor quality.***Recommendations***Short-term: Evaluate the quality of child and program assessments.**

It is recommended that the state provide a menu of assessment options that have already gone through a review process for all early care and education programs. The review should include program assessments, child assessments, and an evaluation of administration and training policies for teachers and providers in the assessment process. Having a menu of thoroughly vetted assessments is imperative for building a system to ensure all programs are operating at high quality levels as well as to make comparisons across programs.

**Long-term: Evaluate and expand Bright and Early North Dakota**

It is recommended that the ND DHS, in partnership with other early care and education state agencies, evaluate Bright and Early North Dakota so that policy makers and stakeholders can learn how well it is working and how it might be improved. An evaluation can help to pinpoint problems with design, implementation, or funding that need to be corrected before it is reasonable to assess whether it is achieving its goals. Concurrent with the evaluation the ND DHS and state agency partners should determine how Bright and Early North Dakota can be expanded to other state programs (ND DPI and Head Start).

**Finding: Hiring and retaining quality teachers and providers is one of the biggest barriers to quality in North Dakota ECE classrooms.***Recommendations***Short-term: Assess and plan the development of an early childhood workforce development system.**

It is recommended that the state, in collaboration with multiple state agencies, develop an early childhood professional workforce development system. In order to develop a workforce development system, an assessment of both in-service and pre-service is needed. The assessment should include an examination of the distribution, format, and content of professional development opportunities as well as the capacity and effectiveness of two- and four-year higher education institutions in preparing ECE teachers and providers. The assessment should include recommendations for improvements as well as a plan to implement a unified workforce development system to the Early Childhood Governor's Council and North Dakota Legislative Council.

**Long-term: Fund and implement an early childhood professional workforce development plan.**

It is recommended that the workforce development plan be funded and implemented as outlined in the development plan. State policies and financing of early childhood workforce development systems have a significant impact on the recruitment, quality, and retention of early childhood professionals. Such a system is needed to support ECE teachers and providers to achieve qualifications appropriate to their occupational roles and responsibilities. The workforce development system will be based on a plan developed from data and address professional standards, career pathways, articulation, data collection, and financing.

**Finding: North Dakota does not have a tool for consistent and reliable data collection of early childhood data to link to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.**

*Recommendations*

**Short-term: Develop and implement an early childhood data collection system.**

It is recommended that the state develop, and then implement, an early childhood data collection system in partnership with the Early Childhood Data Management Council. The data collection plan should include policies and procedures for collecting data and sharing across agencies. At a minimum, the plan should begin by providing guidelines for public school districts to enroll all four and five year old students in the State Automated Reporting System (STARS) and a plan to pilot collection of Head Start and licensed child care data in STARS. Finally, it is recommended that the ND DPI serve as the central data governance agency during the development and initial implementation stages until the Early Childhood Data Management Council is able to review governance policies and make a long-term recommendation.

**Long-term: Expand the North Dakota Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to include early childhood data.**

It is recommended that once work has been done to develop and implement the early childhood data collection system, it should be linked with the North Dakota SLDS to allow for evaluation of the long-term impact of programs and services on child outcomes. The State of North Dakota has developed significant data resources in the SLDS and a natural expansion is the inclusion of early childhood data. However, turning early childhood data resources into information assets that can be managed for effective decision making requires implementation of a data collection system.

**Finding: North Dakota does not have a state plan to develop a comprehensive early childhood care and education system.**

*Recommendations*

**Short-term: Develop a state early care and education action plan.**

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee develop an early care and education action plan to improve the coordination of efforts to better support young children. The action plan should include goals for children ages 0 to 5 and their families that can be operational and measurable to inform state policy and funding decisions. The plan should also include a schedule of regular meetings and directives for the Early Childhood Governor's Council to ensure the work of the plan is carried out.

**Long-term: Implement and monitor the early care and education action plan.**

It is recommended that the action plan be implemented upon completion, then reviewed and refined annually by the Advisory Committee and the Early Childhood Governor's Council as the state makes progress on identified goals. Progress on the action plan should be disseminated to early childhood stakeholders annually. Any revisions to the action plan should be made using valid and reliable data and with input from the Advisory Committee. The North Dakota early childhood action plan should guide all strategic and programmatic initiatives moving forward.

## Promising Practices

The following Promising Practices are aligned with the previous findings and recommendations. They are provided as the North Dakota Legislative Council considers pathways for expanding and enhancing the current early care and education system in North Dakota.

### 1. Pennsylvania's Interagency Data System

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is responsible for developing the early childhood data system, the Early Learning Network (ELN), and works cooperatively with other state government entities including the information technology offices in the departments of education and public welfare. The purpose of the ELN is to enable better evaluation of and support for program decisions at all levels. The ELN collects information about children, teachers, and programs overseen by OCDEL. Information collected includes children's family demographics, health information, service referrals, attendance and enrollment details, and a unique child identifier. ELN also includes program and workforce data such as teacher qualifications, benefits, and turnover rates; classroom quality rating scores; and a unique provider identifier, which is the same teacher identifier system used in the K-12 education system. Child developmental outcomes come from the assessment data system, which feeds into ELN. The other major component of ELN is PELICAN, which contains data for PA Pre-K Counts (the state-funded prekindergarten program), Keystone STARS (program quality information), child care works subsidy case management information, and early intervention services.

### 2. Illinois Department of Human Services and Child Care Collaboration

Illinois Department of Human Services defines child care collaboration as any braiding of Illinois child care subsidy funds or programs with other early childhood funds to provide quality, full-workday, full-year services for eligible families with young children.

Collaborations must:

- Demonstrate improved quality and community collaboration in the application;
- Children must be served in one location for full workday of care;
- Be a current Child Care Assistance Program provider—either contracted or certified;
- Currently collaborate with either Early Head Start/Head Start or Preschool for All/Prevention Initiative (State-funded pre-kindergarten); and
- Be licensed.

### 3. Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

Many states implement a Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) designed to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early childhood programs statewide.

Assessments of early childhood programs are conducted using research based tools. Often, the QRIS provide early childhood programs incentives and resources to improve quality. QRIS are being implemented in more than half of states as a strategy to improve program quality for young children. In January 2010, ND Child Care Aware piloted a QRIS in Cass County with grants from the United Way. Lessons learned from the pilot informed the next generation QRIS, now

called Bright and Early North Dakota. Limited statewide expansion of Bright and Early North Dakota is occurring incrementally within the state throughout the current biennium. Bright and Early North Dakota has not undergone a rigorous validation study. Measuring quality across multiple settings is very complex, and rigorous longitudinal evaluations are necessary to establish a causal link between program quality and outcomes. As many states have only recently begun to implement a QRIS or revise an original system, clear evidence linking ratings with measures of children's development is not yet available. In the absence of conclusive evidence, QRIS still offer a method to support early care and education programs to increase quality standards.

#### 4. Hawaii's Early Childhood Action Strategy

To improve the coordination of efforts to better support young children, the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) was established with the authority and responsibility to make fiscal, policy and program decisions regarding early childhood in Hawaii. In 2012, EOEL, in partnership with over 80 private and public partners, identified six critical focus areas as building blocks for the establishment of a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system. This initiative led to the creation of an early childhood Action Strategy, "Taking Action for Hawaii's Children". The Action Strategy focuses on children, prenatal to age 8, across the domains of health, safety, care, and education. EOEL's Action Strategy is operational and measurable based on how a child's development is supported. The Action Strategy has helped Hawaii approach early childhood policy and funding statewide in a strategic and data-driven manner.

# Conclusion

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In conclusion, the recommendations set forth in the North Dakota Early Care and Early Education Study present a challenge for the STATE as well as an opportunity to unite the early care and education community in North Dakota and, to ensure all young children ages 0 to 5 have access to high quality early care and education. While this report did have limitations in providing an all-encompassing overview of the early care and education system in North Dakota due to time and data availability, it does begin to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Where are the children who need early care and education services in North Dakota?
2. Where are the early care and education programs in North Dakota?
3. What indicators of quality are utilized by early care and education programs in North Dakota?
4. What are the costs associated with early care and education in North Dakota?

Based on the findings from this report, North Dakota should continue to:

- Support early care and education programs through current state-level initiatives.

North Dakota should begin to:

- Develop an early care and education funding plan.
- Evaluate the quality of child and program assessments.
- Assess and plan the development of an early childhood workforce development system.
- Develop and implement an early childhood data collection system.
- Develop a state early care and education action plan.

Early childhood state agencies have already prioritized the care and education of young children ages 0 to 5 through several state-level initiatives including early childhood grant opportunities for educators and school districts, the North Dakota Pre-kindergarten Content Standards, development of a kindergarten entry assessment, and Bright and Early North Dakota. It is now time to build upon these efforts using the recommendations outlined in this report.

# Glossary

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**Accessibility:** The availability of child care or early learning programs when and where a family needs it.

**Adult-to-Child Ratio:** A ratio of the qualified adults to children in a child care or education program.

**Assessment:** The process of gathering, describing, or quantifying information regarding performance, whether that be child or staff, as well as the environment where services are provided.

**Blended Funds:** Funds from two or more separate funding sources are wrapped together within one full-workday, full-year program budget to pay for a unified set of program services to a group of children. Costs do not have to be allocated and tracked by individual funding source.

**Braided Funds:** Funds from two or more funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of services to individual children, but revenues are allocated and expenditures tracked by categorical funding source. Cost allocation methods are required to assure that there is no duplicate funding of service costs and that each funding source is charged its fair share of program and administrative costs.

**Bright and Early North Dakota:** *Bright & Early North Dakota* is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System program, which provides a guide to help child care providers focus on school readiness. Child care providers receive support through one-on-one coaching from a trained child care consultant, grant dollars to purchase educational toys and materials for their programs, bonus awards for achieving program goals, and recognition for achieving and maintaining levels of quality in addition to licensing.

**Capacity:** The total number of children dependent on age, size of facility, and other variables that may be enrolled at any given time in a particular program.

**Caregiver:** Someone who provides care and protection for children in or outside the home (e.g., parents, relatives, child care providers and early childhood teachers, as well as social workers, teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and mentors).

**Center-Based Child Care:** Programs that are licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services in a non-residential setting.

**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** Federally funded grant authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, to assist low-income families, families receiving temporary public assistance, and those transitioning from public assistance to obtain child care so they can work or attend training/education.

**Child Care Aware of North Dakota (CCA ND):** This program helps families understand the elements of quality child care and search for child care that meet their specific needs; providers start their businesses and improve their program through training and technical assistance; and communities assess and address their child care needs.

**Child Care Center:** A facility that provides regularly scheduled care for a group of children one month of age through twelve years of age for periods of less than 24 hours.

**Child Care Home:** A child care service offered in the provider's home. Although regulations differ, most states require that child care providers be regulated if they care for more than four children.

**Child Care Provider:** An individual who provides child care services.

**Child Care:** Providing care and supervision for children in a home or center setting.

**Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential:** A credential earned by an early childhood educator who has demonstrated his or her skills in working with young children and their families by successfully completing an established credentialing process. The CDA credentialing process is administered by the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition.

**Coaching:** A relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

**Continuity of Care:** Maintaining teacher relationships across the infant, toddler, and preschool years with few transitions as possible and sustaining the service intensity and duration.

**Co-Payment:** A specific fixed amount for a subsidized service and is the recipient's responsibility to pay.

**Curriculum:** Guided areas of developmentally appropriate instruction aligned to state standards that promotes learning and development in the following areas: cognitive, social, emotional, self-management/health, and speech/language.

**Developmental Disabilities:** A substantially limiting physical or mental impairment that affects basic life activities such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, caring for oneself, learning, or working.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP):** A concept of classroom practice that reflects knowledge of child development and an understanding of the unique personality, learning style, culture, and family background of each child.

**Drop-In Child Care:** A child care program that children attend on an unscheduled basis.

**Early Care and Education (ECE):** Programs available to children ages birth to kindergarten entry.

**Early Care and Education Assistant Teacher:** This assistant teacher works with the teacher in conducting a developmentally and educationally appropriate program for children in a group or classroom.

**Early Care and Education Directors/Administrators:** These staff are in a position to manage and/or operate an early care and education program. In the current study, this includes Head Start Directors, public and private school district Superintendents and Elementary Principals, and licensed child care providers.

**Early Care and Education Workforce:** This workforce includes those working with young children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in centers, homes, and schools) and their families that work on behalf of children and their families (in agencies, organizations, institutions of higher education, etc.) with a primary role of supporting children's development and learning.

**Early Care and Education Program:** Any (a) state-licensed or state-regulated program or provider, regardless of setting or funding source, that provides early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry, including, but not limited to programs operated by child care centers and in family child care homes; (b) preschool programs funded by the federal government, state or local educational agencies (including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)-funded programs); (c) Early Head Start and Head Start programs; and (d) any non-relative child care providers not otherwise regulated by the state that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting.

**Early Care and Education Teacher/Provider:** For the purposes of this study, any professional working in early learning and development programs, including but not limited to public or private school district teachers, North Dakota licensed teachers, center-based and family child care providers, infant and toddler specialists, early childhood special educators, administrators, Head Start teachers, Early Head Start teachers, preschool and other teachers, teacher assistants, family service staff, and health coordinators.

**Early Childhood Education:** For the purpose of the study, education programs designed for children before they enter elementary school.

**Early Childhood Professional:** Individual who works with young children in any capacity.

**Early Childhood Teacher:** Individual who plans and conducts a developmentally and educationally appropriate program for children. In the current study these include highly qualified North Dakota licensed teachers.

**Early Childhood:** For the purposes of this study it refers to the period of life from birth to kindergarten entry.

**Early Head Start (Early HS):** A program established under the 1994 Head Start Reauthorization Act to serve low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. This program is family centered and community based and designed to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Early HS supports parents in fulfilling their parental roles and helps them move toward economic independence. Participation in this program is determined based on referrals by local entities (e.g., Head Start programs to Early HS program centers). Programs offer the following core services: (1) high quality early education in and out of the home; (2) family support services, home visits, and parent education; (3) comprehensive health and mental health services, including services for pregnant and post-partum women; (4) nutrition; (5) child care, and (6) ongoing support for parents through case management and peer support. Programs have a broad range of flexibility in how they provide their services.

**Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS):** A set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that describe what all children from birth until kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning.

**Early Learning Intermediary Organization:** An organization (statewide, regional, or community based) that represents networks of early learning and development programs in the state that have influence or authority over those early learning and development programs, including, but not limited to child care resource and referral agencies; state Head Start associations; family child care associations; state affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children; state affiliates of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood; where appropriate, the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association; the National Tribal, American Indian, and Alaskan Native Head Start Association; and the National Indian Child Care Association.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act:** First enacted in 1965, provides legal authority for the federal government's financial support of K-12 education. It sets funding limits and establishes legal requirements for state and local education departments, universities, Native American tribes, and other entities receiving federal assistance through programs such as Title I.

**Enrollment:** The total number of children counted in an early care and education program or classroom. Enrollment may fluctuate throughout the year.

**Estimated Need:** The difference between the actual population of children ages birth through five years needing care compared to the actual enrollment and capacity of early care and education programs.

**Extended Day Program:** A program that provides supervision, academic enrichment, and recreation for children before and after school hours.

**Family Child Care:** Child care provided for a group of children in a home setting.

**Federal Funding:** Funding provided by the federal government to operate early care and education programs and services such as Head Start, CCDF, Title I, and IDEA. Funding formulas vary for each program, and are often based on serving a target population.

**Financial Incentive:** Financial support “designed to address the gap between the cost of producing a higher-quality program and the tuition prices charged to families” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 41). Incentives include tiered reimbursement, start-up grants, improvement grants, quality awards, quality bonuses, scholarships, wage enhancements, retention bonuses, tax benefits, and others.

**Formative Assessment:** Assessment processes that are specifically designed to monitor children's progress and to guide and improve instructional practice.

**Growing Futures North Dakota (GF ND):** The process used by the North Dakota Department of Human Services for approval of informal (not-for-college credit) child care training in the state. Only approved training is accepted toward license renewal. Growing Futures is a statewide system designed to support the field of early care and education by validating individual professional achievements, heightening professionalism, and expanding career opportunities. Growing Futures is for professionals who administer or provide direct care to children in licensed child care programs (both family/group and center), Head Start, pre-k and public schools, and other settings serving children 0 to 8 years of age.

**Head Start (HS):** A Federal program administered by the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive services for income eligible preschool aged children and their families. Head Start provides services in education, health, and parent engagement to promote school readiness. Grants are awarded to local public or private non-profit agencies. The basic elements of Head Start are regulated through federal program performance standards. Grantees and parents guide program operations and each program is designed to meet the unique needs of families in local communities.

**Inclusion:** The principle of enabling all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Federal law that supports systems that provide services to identify and support children who have or are at-risk of development delays or disabilities and their families. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Funds are provided through IDEA Part C, early intervention services for infants and toddler, ages birth through two and IDEA Part B Section 619, special education services for eligible children, ages three through five. The Part C section of the IDEA provides regulations for early intervention services for children from birth through two years of age who have disabilities. A lead agency in each state is responsible for implementation of the provisions of the Part C of the IDEA. The North Dakota Department of Human Services administers early intervention programs and services for infants and toddlers through eight regional Human Service Centers. Early intervention could include Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program

Management, Infant Development services, or other family supports. The Part B section of the IDEA outlines services for children and youth with disabilities who are ages three through 21. Specific provisions are included for children ages three through five. Administration of these special education and related services is provided by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI). These services are provided by the school district where the family home is located.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The IEP is the result of a process that is essential to ensure that individuals with disabilities have appropriate educational planning to accommodate a child's unique instructional needs, and that these needs are met in an appropriate learning environment. It is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) for all children eligible for special education and related services.

**Infant Toddler Specialist:** An individual whose job is to provide support to professionals and caregivers who provide early care and education to infants and toddlers.

**Informal Care:** Child care provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors, often in unregulated settings.

**In-Home Child Care:** Child care provided in the child's home by relatives or non-relatives during the hours when parents are working. Non-relative caregivers are sometimes called nannies, babysitters, and au pairs.

**In-Kind:** A contribution of property, supplies, or services that are contributed by non-federal third parties without charge to the program.

**Licensed Care:** An early child care or education program that has met the state minimum standards for program operations and is legally operating under a license issued by the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

**Licensed Child Care Center:** The care of 19 or more children in public or private buildings, churches, or schools.

**Licensed Child Care:** Child care programs operated in homes or in facilities that fall within the regulatory system of a state or community and comply with those regulations. Many states have different levels of regulatory requirements and use different terms to refer to these levels (e.g., licensing, certification, registration).

**Licensed Family Child Care:** The care of seven or less children in the provider's own home.

**Licensed Group Child Care:** The care of 10 to 30 children in the home or other type of facility.

**Licensed Preschools:** Part-time educational and socialization experiences for children age 2 years to kindergarten.

**Licensed School-Age Programs:** The care of school age children before and/or after school. Some programs provide care during school holidays and summer vacations.

**License-Exempt Child Care:** Legally operating child care that is exempt from the regulatory system of the state or community. In many cases, subsidized child care that is otherwise license-exempt must comply with requirements of the subsidy system (e.g., criminal records checks of providers).

**Licensing Inspection:** An on-site inspection of a facility to assure compliance with licensing or other regulatory requirements.

**Licensing or Regulatory Requirements:** Standards necessary for a provider to legally operate child care services in a state or locality, including registration requirements established under state, local, or Tribal law.

**Mentors:** A sustained relationship between a novice and an expert. In a clearly- defined teacher mentoring relationship, the expert provides support and guidance that helps the novice develop the necessary skills to enter or continue on his or her career path. Key activities associated with mentoring are observing, discussing, and providing feedback on performance.

**Mixed Age Grouping:** Grouping children or students so the chronological age span is greater than one year. Multiple-age grouping is prevalent in family child care.

**Monitoring:** Process whereby early care and education programs are checked to assure that they are continuing to meet the criteria for their level of rating. Failing to maintain the criteria may be demonstrated by significant turnover in staff, a new director, a significant licensing violation, etc. All of these may trigger a new rating. Programs utilizing federal funding are also subjected to program monitoring to assure the use of funds are appropriate.

**Multiple License Facility:** Facility with more than one type of license (e.g., a center and preschool).

**Non-Traditional Hour Child Care:** Care provided during non-traditional work hours (i.e., weekends, work between either before 6:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday).

**North Dakota Century Code (NDCC):** The codification of general and permanent law in North Dakota. The Century Code is arranged systematically under broad titles such as Title 15 – Education, Title 15.1 – Elementary and Secondary Education. Laws with specific expiration dates usually are not codified in the Century Code. Following each legislative assembly, the Century Code is updated to reflect changes. The Century Code is available online at [www.legis.nd.gov](http://www.legis.nd.gov). (North Dakota Administrative Code, aka. Administrative Rule)

**North Dakota Core Competencies for Child Care Workers:** Fundamental knowledge, ability, or expertise in a specific subject area or skill set. In the field of early care and education, core competencies are those things that all practitioners are expected to know and be able to do in their work with and on behalf of young children. In other words, the core competencies describe

the practices and behaviors that are expected of early childhood professionals on the job. The word "core" indicates that the individual has a strong basis from which to gain the additional competence to do a specific job.

**North Dakota Department of Human Services (ND DHS):**

The North Dakota Department of Human Services offers programs, services, and other resources that help vulnerable North Dakotans of all ages maintain or enhance their quality of life, which may be threatened by lack of financial resources, emotional crises, disabling conditions, or an inability to protect themselves.

The department oversees Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (Healthy Steps), Economic Assistance Programs including Child Care Assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; Child Support; Aging Services; Child Welfare Services including Child Protection, Family Preservation Services, Foster Care, and Adoption; Vocational Rehabilitation; Developmental Disabilities Services; Mental Health Services; Substance Abuse Services; and Field Services including the State Hospital, the Life Skills and Transition Center, and eight regional Human Service Centers.

**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Approved Pre-kindergarten:** A public or private school district's pre-kindergarten program, where the pre-kindergarten grade configuration has received approval from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDCC 15.1-37-01).

**North Dakota Gearing Up for Kindergarten:** Program developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service in cooperation with parent resource centers across the state in order to assist parents and their 4-year-old children in preparing for their transition to kindergarten.

**Ongoing Assessment:** The continuous process of observing a child's developmental competencies and using this information to inform and individualize instruction.

**Paraprofessionals:** An assistant educator who supports the instruction of children under the direction of a licensed teacher.

**Parent Choice:** Accessibility by parents to early childhood education and care services of their choice.

**Parent Education:** Instruction or information that supports parents on parenting-related topics.

**Pre-service Training:** Education and training programs offered to early care and education teachers/providers prior to their formal work.

**Process Quality:** Interactions among individuals in the early childhood classroom. Process quality includes the teacher being actively involved with the children using materials, participating in activities, or supervising children. It also includes interactions between children

(child-child interactions) or between adults (adult-adult interactions), including parents and teachers.

**Professional Development (PD):** Opportunities for early care and education teacher/providers to receiving ongoing training to increase preparation for the care and education of children in early care and education environments. These include mentoring programs, credentialing programs, in-service training, and degree programs.

**Provider:** Individuals or organizations offering child care services (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, school-age child care programs).

**Quality:** Commonly refers to early childhood settings in which children are safe, healthy, and receive appropriate stimulation. Care settings are responsive, thus allowing children to form secure attachments to nurturing adults. Quality programs or providers actively engage families to ensure academic success.

**Quality Indicators:** A set of measures that have been proven to affect the quality of early care and education and out-of-school-time programs (e.g., adult-child ratio, group size, caregiver qualifications, turnover, teacher-child interactions, curriculum, assessment, and accreditation).

**Quality Initiatives:** Initiatives designed to increase the quality or availability of child care programs or to provide parents with information and support to enhance their ability to select child care arrangements most suited to their family and child's needs. The Child Care Development Fund provides funds to states to support such initiatives. Common quality initiatives include child care resource and referral services for parents, training and professional development and wage enhancement for staff, and facility improvement and accreditation for child care programs.

**Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** A “method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 4). QRIS can exist on a spectrum in terms of their development and implementation and can operate statewide or in a local area. A fully functioning QRIS; however, includes the following components: (1) quality standards for programs and practitioners, (2) supports and an infrastructure to meet such standards, (3) monitoring and accountability systems to ensure compliance with quality standards, (4) ongoing financial assistance that is linked to meeting quality standards, and (5) engagement and outreach strategies (Child Trends, 2009).

**Retention:** The reduction in the turnover of child care and education staff.

**School Readiness:** Involves children possessing the skills, behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school, later learning, and life. School readiness describes a child's preparedness to engage and benefit in learning experiences.

**School-Age Child Care:** Child care for children who are at least five years old through age twelve. These programs complement the school day and non-school days, including holidays and summer vacation.

**School-Based Child Care:** Child care programs that occur in school facilities.

**Slot/Space:** An opening, based on program capacity, for a child to enroll in an early care and education program.

**Special Education:** Educational programs for students with disabilities and unique educational needs required specially-designed instruction and services.

**State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS):** The Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) is a data warehouse comprised of historical education and workforce training data. The objective of the SLDS is to provide data on the outcomes of North Dakota education and workforce training programs. North Dakota SLDS will collect data from multiple entities, via multiple data sources/data warehouses.

**State Superintendent of Public Instruction - Department of Public Instruction (DPI):** The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to enforce all state statutes and federal regulations pertaining to the establishment and maintenance of public schools and related programs, supervise the ND Schools for the Deaf and Blind, and the State Library, operate the Department of Public Instruction efficiently and effectively, expand the delivery options that increase educational opportunities for all North Dakota citizens, evaluate and communicate educational policy and vision to all North Dakota residents and serve as an advocate for adequate financial resources to support public education.

**Structural Quality:** Features of the early care and education environment (e.g., group/class size, ratio, and staff qualifications) that can increase the quality of care and education. Its components are relatively easy to measure.

**Subsidized Child Care:** Child care that is at least partially funded by public or charitable funds to decrease its cost for parents.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** Formerly known as AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. A program that offers assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs.

**Tiered Reimbursement System:** A subsidy payment system offering higher payments for child care that meets higher quality standards or for child care that is in short supply.

**Title I:** Part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislation of the U.S. Department of Education. Section A of Title I describes how funds under this Act may be used to provide early education development services to at-risk children through a local education agency. These services may be coordinated/integrated with other preschool programs.

**Unlicensed Child Care:** Child care programs that have not been licensed by the state. The term often refers both to child care that can be legally unlicensed as well as programs that should be but are not licensed. Also, often referred to as Family, Friend and Neighbor Care.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation not mandated by state law or regulations (for example, use of pre-kindergarten state standards).

**Wait List:** The list of children kept by early care and education programs of families requesting care when the program or classroom is at capacity.

**Wrap-Around Child Care Programs:** Child care designed to fill the gap between another early childhood program's hours and the hours that parents work.

**Zero to Three:** ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit that provides parents, professionals and policymakers the knowledge and know-how to nurture early development.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

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# Technical Appendix

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# Appendix A: Methodology

To study development, delivery, and administration of early care and education settings statewide, a variety of stakeholder groups were included using multiple methods. Stakeholders included the following groups:

- **Directors/Administrators of early care and education settings:** Head Start (HS), North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) public and private school district superintendents and elementary principals, licensed and unlicensed child care ( $N = 184$ )
- **Parents of young children:** ages 0 to 5 years ( $N = 285$ )

Table A1 presents descriptions for the early care and education settings included in the study.

**Table A1. Included Early Care and Education Settings**

<b>Early Care &amp; Education Settings in North Dakota</b>	<b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Licensed Child Care</u></b> North Dakota law (NDCC 50-11.1) requires licensure of Early Childhood Services (child care) by the North Dakota Department of Human Services (ND DHS); and authorizes the North Dakota Department of Human Services to develop standards of child care to be used for the regulation of these child care settings.
	<b><u>North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Approved Pre-Kindergarten</u></b> North Dakota law (15.1-37-01) authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to approve pre-kindergarten programs operating within North Dakota public or private school districts. Classrooms may include all children deemed eligible by the local school district. This includes special education and Title I.
	<b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Head Start/Early Head Start</u></b> Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs, serving children from birth to age five, expectant mothers, and families. Head Start and Early Head Start are administered by the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Throughout this report Early Head Start is included in Head Start data unless specifically noted otherwise.
	<b><u>North Dakota Department of Human Services Unlicensed Child Care</u></b> Unlicensed child care may be registered with the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Some unlicensed providers that are registered with the North Dakota Department of Human Services are monitored on a limited basis.

## Instrument Development, Data Collection, and Samples

Several methods were used to collect data to inform the current study, including surveys, focus groups, and secondary artifact and data collection. The MIELL evaluation team worked closely with the study Advisory Committee to develop instruments and to determine participant samples to ensure the appropriate and needed data were collected. Questions were organized to address the primary evaluation objectives (see Table A2 for general data collection topics). Sample sizes for primary data collection methods can be found in Table A3, with additional details provided in the sections that follow.

**Table A2. Data collection topics for stakeholder groups**

<b>Directors/Administrators</b>
<b>General Information</b> Roles and responsibilities, educational background
<b>Program Information</b> Program characteristics, child demographics, curriculum and assessment
<b>Personnel Information</b> Staff background, education and experience, professional development and coaching
<b>Operational Cost Information</b> Funding sources, operational costs
<b>Parents</b>
<b>General Information</b> Location, early care and education needs
<b>Program Information</b> Factors for choosing programs, wait list experience
<b>Cost Information</b> Costs and barriers to accessing care

**Table A3. Sample Sizes by Primary Data Collection Method**

Data Collection Method	Sample Size ( <i>n</i> )
<b>Surveys</b>	
ECE Directors/Administrators	184
Parents of young children	285
<b>Focus Groups</b>	
ECE Directors/Administrators	31 (across three focus groups)
<b>Excel Data Request</b>	
ECE Directors/Administrators	65 DPI – 19(36%) HS – 10(71%) CC – 18(1%)

### Surveys

Surveys were developed for each of the stakeholder groups included in the study which included Directors/Administrators of early learning programs and schools and Parents of children 0 to 5. Surveys were developed using sound survey development techniques, such as the Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000) and items included both closed- and open-ended response options. Questions were formed around the study objectives (Table A2). Discussions and feedback from the Advisory Committee informed the development of specific questions. All surveys can be found in Appendix B.

**Data collection.** All surveys were administered via electronic survey. Online surveys were administered in English using Qualtrics software to all participants. Passive consent to participate in the online surveys was obtained from participants, as indicated by their completion of the survey. All participants had a minimum of four weeks to complete the online survey.

**Sample: Directors/Providers.** A total of 184 early care and education directors/administrators completed the online survey. The survey was set up so that duplicate responses could not be submitted to ensure a participant is not represented more than once in the data. Emails containing the survey information and link were sent to all members of the Advisory Committee who were asked to forward this information to all directors/administrators for whom email addresses were available. Survey information was also posted to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) early childhood website as well as sent through the Child Care Aware of North Dakota newsletter. Participant sample information is provided in Table A3 and in Appendix C.

**Sample: Parents.** Parents of young children ages 0 to 5 were asked to complete an online survey regarding their early care and education experiences. Parents were included in the current study only if they currently had at least one child who had not entered kindergarten. Parents were informed of the survey opportunity using multiple methods. Survey links were sent to the Advisory Committee, who were asked to then forward the information on to parents with children enrolled in their programs. The survey link was also posted to the ND DPI early childhood website as well as sent through the Child Care Aware of North Dakota newsletter. A total of 285 parent surveys were completed. Participant demographic information can be found in Appendix D.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups provide an opportunity to obtain additional and more detailed information on a topic. The opportunity to participate in a focus group was offered to all directors/administrators. A single protocol was developed to guide focus groups and to gain participants' perspectives on early care and education needs (see Table A2 data collection topics). A demographic information form was also created to obtain general information about the participants. Feedback on all instruments was collected and included from the Advisory Committee. The focus group protocol and participant information sheet can be found in Appendix B.

**Data collection.** A total of three focus groups were conducted with directors/administrators. Focus groups lasted approximately one hour and were conducted virtually via video conference system at a central location and time to be as convenient as possible for participants. Because focus groups were conducted virtually, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form if they agreed to participate and return it to the study director prior to the meeting. All participants were also asked to complete a general demographic form to provide additional and more systematic information regarding their role, educational background, location, and return it prior to the focus group. Focus groups were audio recorded to ensure accuracy during later coding and analyses.

**Sample.** A total of 31 individuals participated in the focus groups. Additional demographic information, are presented in Appendix E. Directors/administrators were notified of the focus group opportunities via emails, flyers, and/or via the phone by the study director.

## Excel Data Requests

An Excel data request was submitted to all directors/administrators to collect additional program cost and characteristic information not readily available through another source. Requested variables were formed around the study objectives. Discussions and feedback from the Advisory Committee informed the

development of variables requested. A list of requested variables can be found in Appendix B.

*Data collection.* All Excel data requests were administered via email. Participants had a minimum of four weeks to complete the data request.

*Sample: Directors/Administrators.* A total of 65 directors/providers of early care and education program completed the online survey. Emails containing the Excel data request were sent to all directors/administrators for whom email addresses were available. Participant sample information and demographics are provided in Table A1 and in Appendix C.

## Secondary Data

Several existing data sources were collected and consulted from numerous state entities.

**Table A4. Extant data sources consulted**

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – STARS Enrollment, Teacher salary scale
North Dakota Department of Human Services Head Start – PIRs, CLASS data, Salary comparison
North Dakota Department of Human Services – Licensing data
Child Care Aware of North Dakota - Child care data trend, Salary comparison, Cost comparison
North Dakota Growing Futures Registry- Membership, Pathway, Professional Development Data
North Dakota Bright and Early Pilot report
North Dakota Kids Count 2013 report
North Dakota Census office – population and income characteristics

## Analyses

Quantitative and fiscal analyses were conducted using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. Findings from multiple data sources and data collection methods were triangulated to identify themes. Data from the two parent interviews were analyzed with the survey data. Data from focus groups were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis, which is used to describe, analyze, and summarize primary patterns observed in data. Patterns and themes were identified; coding schemes established; and then, selected chunks of the textual information were coded, counted, and analyzed. Qualitative data were analyzed using the software program, MAXQDA. The main body of the report includes an integrated synthesis of the study findings across all stakeholder groups and methodologies. The following appendices include demographic data by stakeholder group and research methodology.

# Appendix B: Instruments

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## Early Care and Education Director/Administrator Survey

### Participant Information p1

1. What *BEST* describes your role within your early care and education setting? (check one)
  - Provider
  - Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Coordinator
  - Owner/Operator
  - Principal
  - Superintendent
  - Any of the above AND also teacher
  - Other
  
2. What is your *highest* level of education obtained? (check one)
  - High School
  - CDA
  - Associate's Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree (B.A. or B.S.)
  - Master's Degree (M.A. or M.S.)
  - Master's Degree (M.Ed.)
  - Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.)
  - Doctorate Degree (Ed.D.)
  - Other <describe>
  
3. In what general field of study is your highest level of education? (check one)
  - Child Development
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Elementary Education
  - Special Education
  - Other <describe>
  
4. Did you complete an Excel file providing data to Carrie Germeroth for the purposes of this study already?  
Yes/No (If yes, these participants will only respond to a smaller subset of questions because they have already provided the information)

### Program Information p2

5. For the purposes of helping us understand where services are located state-wide, please list all zip codes your program/school serves.

<limited text box>

6. Which describes your program/school (check one)
  - ND DPI Approved Pre K
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Head Start
  - Early Head Start
  - Licensed child care center
  - Licensed family child care home
  - Licensed preschool
  - Licensed Group child care
  - Self-declared provider, approved relative provider
  - Other <describe>
  
7. Is your program enrolled in North Dakota Bright and Early?  
Yes/No, If yes, what is your star rating?
  
8. Is your program/school currently accredited (e.g. NAEYC, NECPA, NAFCC)?  
Yes/No, If yes, list all accreditations
  
9. List the ages of children your early childhood program/school serves.  
<Text>
  
10. Please list the number of months your program/school operates each year.  
<Limited text>
  
11. How many days per week does your program/school operate?  
<Limited numeric text >
  
12. Approximately how many hours a day does your program/school operate?  
<Limited numeric text>
  
13. What is the approximate percentage of bilingual children or children learning English as a second language in your program/school? (check one)
  - 0%
  - 1-25%
  - 26-50%
  - 51-75%
  - 75-100%
  
14. Please list the percentages (by race) of the children in your program/school.  
White \_\_%  
African American \_\_%  
Hispanic/Latino \_\_%  
Native American \_\_%  
Asian Pacific Islander \_\_%

Other\_\_%

15. What is the approximate percentage of children identified as having special needs and/or with IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) or IFSPs (Individualized Family Service Plans) in your program/school? (check one)

- 0%
- 1-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 75-100%

16. Does your program/school have multiple classrooms?  
Yes/No, If yes, how many?

17. Does your program/school currently have a wait list?  
Yes/No, If yes, how many children are on the wait list?

- Typical age on waitlist/certain ages more common on waitlist than others
- On average how long will children wait before space is available?

18. Are there children in the geographic area served by your program/school that are not able to access services?

Yes/No, If yes, what are the barriers to access? Are certain populations/areas underserved?

19. What is the average group size for your program/school? If serving different age groups please list all and indicate the age groups.

- Limited text box (enter #)

20. What is the average adult:child ratio your program/school? If serving different age groups please list all and indicate the age groups.

- Limited text box (enter #)

21. Please list all interventions (**home-visiting, screening, other**) available to children and families at your program/school.

- Limited text box (enter #)

22. Does your program/school use a curriculum?  
Yes/no, If, yes please name and describe.

23. Do you collect data and/or assessments on **child** performance?

Yes/No, If yes, list name(s) of assessment(s)

- When are they administered? How frequently?
- How do you use the assessment(s) in your program? Check all that apply  
Eligibility, inform instruction, screening, other \_\_\_\_ <describe>

24. Do you collect data and/or assessments to track **provider/teacher/classroom** performance?

Yes/No, If yes, list name(s) of assessment(s)

- When are they administered? How frequently? How do you use the assessment(s) in your program?

## Personnel Information p4

25. How many teachers/providers do you employ?
- Limited text box (enter #) (List full-time/part-time separately)
26. How many assistants/aides do you employ?
- Limited text box (enter #)(List full-time/part-time separately)
27. How many other support staff do you employ (Support staff include any position necessary to support daily operations e.g. nurse, office administrator, etc..)
- Limited text box (enter #)(List full-time/part-time separately)
28. How many teachers/providers have the following degrees?
- Certificate of Competence
  - Certificate of Completion
  - Certificate of Achievement
  - Child Development Associate Credential
  - Associate's Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctoral Degree
  - High School/GED
29. Are teachers/providers required to have a degree in an education/early childhood (or related) field?  
Yes/No, If yes, please specify
30. Do you or teachers/providers in your program/school have opportunities to engage in professional development?  
Yes/No, If Yes, please describe
31. Do you or teachers/providers in your program/school receive any coaching or mentoring (may include any one-on-one modeling or in-classroom support of instruction)?  
Yes/No, If Yes, please describe
32. Does your program/school engage in partnerships with families (e.g., special events for families to attend at the school/program)?  
Yes/No, If Yes, please describe
33. Does your program/school engage in partnerships with the community? (e.g., fundraising efforts to subsidize operational costs)  
Yes/No, If yes, describe

## Operational Cost Information p5

34. What is the average cost for families to attend your program/school per month? If different by age groups, please specify.  
<Limited text box>
35. What sources of funding are used to operate your program/school? Check all that apply
- Families paying tuition
  - Federal Grants (If selected, will be asked to list types of federal funding)
  - State Grants (If selected, will be asked to list types of state funding)
  - Local (If selected, will be asked to list types of local funding)
  - Other, describe
36. Are the resources currently available for your program/school adequate to accomplish any required program/school standards/regulations?  
Yes/No, If No, please explain <limited text box>
37. If more funding became available, what would be your top three priorities for using it?  
<Limited text to 3 option responses>
38. Do you currently have need to expand or create facilities to provide services to meet demand in your area?  
Yes/No, If Yes, explain  
<Limited text box>
39. What are your annual operating expenses for the following years?
- 2013
  - 2012
  - 2011
40. What are the intangible costs of operating your program? (Intangible may mean performing multiple duties such as stepping in as a teacher or bus driver, working beyond typical working hours +40hours/week)  
<Limited text box>
41. Is there anything else you'd like policy makers in North Dakota to know about your program/school or early childhood care and education needs in North Dakota?  
<Limited text box>

## Parent Survey

### Background Information p1

1. Please provide the zip code where you currently access or hope to access early care and education services.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What type(s) of providers/programs have you sent your child/children to or are considering sending your child to? (check all that apply)

- A preschool operated by your local school district
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Licensed child care center
- Licensed family child care home
- Licensed preschool
- Licensed group child care
- Self-declared provider, approved relative provider
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many children in the following age groups are you currently seeking care and education for?

Age group	Number of children
0 to 17 months	
18 to 35 months	
3 years	
4 years	
5 years	

4. How many days per week do you need early care and education for your child?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many hours per day do you need care and education for your child or children?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Program Information p2

6. What do you look for in an early care and education setting? Please describe what is most important to you.
7. Do the early care and education options available to you meet your needs? **Please circle:** Yes or No  
If you circled “No” please explain why
8. Describe the early care and education options currently available to you.
9. Are you currently on a wait list for an early care or education program/provider?

Please circle: Yes or No

- a. If Yes, how long, please check one.

Less than one month	
One to six months	
Six months to one year	
More than a year	

- b. What impact does not having early care or education options for your child/children have on your family?

### Cost Information p3

10. Is cost a factor in selecting an early care and education program/provider?

Please circle: Yes or No

11. Are there other factors that influence your decision to select a child care and education program/provider?

Please circle: Yes or No

- a. If yes, please describe the other factors below.

12. What do you think are the barriers to accessing early care and education where you live?

13. Do/will you pay for early care and education entirely on your own or will you access state/federal supports?

Please circle: Yes or No

- a. If No, how will you pay for your child(ren)'s early care and education experiences?

14. Do you know about the Child Care Assistance (CCA) that can help parents pay for child care?

Please circle: Yes or No

15. Do you or would you consider accessing Child Care Assistance (CCA)

Please circle: Yes or No

16. If financial resources were available to pay one parent to stay home and care for their child would you consider using such funds?

Please circle: Yes or No, If No, please explain why.

17. What else would you like to share about your experiences accessing early care and education where you live?

## Early Care and Education Director/Administrator Focus Group Participant Information

1. What *BEST* describes your role within your early care and education setting? (check one)
  - Provider
  - Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Coordinator
  - Owner/Operator
  - Principal
  - Superintendent
  - Any of the above AND also teacher
  - Other <describe>
  
2. What is your *highest* level of education obtained? (check one)
  - High School
  - CDA
  - Associate's Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree (B.A. or B.S.)
  - Master's Degree (M.A. or M.S.)
  - Master's Degree (M.Ed.)
  - Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.)
  - Doctorate Degree (Ed.D.)
  - Other <describe>
  
3. In what general field of study is your highest level of education? (check one)
  - Child Development
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Elementary Education
  - Special Education
  - Other (describe)
  
4. For the purposes of helping us understand where services are located state-wide, please list all zip codes your program/school serves?
  
5. Which describes your program/school (check one)
  - DPI Approved Pre K
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Head Start
  - Early Head Start
  - Licensed child care center
  - Licensed family child care home
  - Licensed preschool
  - Licensed Group child care
  - Self-declared provider, approved relative provider
  - Other <describe>

6. List the ages and enrollment numbers of children your early childhood program/school serves as of December 1, 2013.
7. Please list the number of months your program/school operates each year.
8. How many days per week does your program/school operate?
9. Approximately how many hours a day does your program/school operate?

### **ND Early Care and Education Director/Administrator Focus Group Protocol**

1. Describe the standards (program) or regulations (beyond licensing) your program/school is required to meet.
  - a. Prompt: What if any quality standards does your program/school adhere to?
    - What is required or self-imposed in terms of standards and regulations?
    - How do you measure, monitor, and assess your program's quality? Is there a specific instrument(s) utilized?
2. Are currently available financial and non-financial resources (e.g., qualified staff, building space, leadership support, etc.) adequate to accomplish standards and regulations? Explain why or why not.
3. What funding sources do you generally access to operate your program/school?
  - a. How do families typically pay for care? If you serve children on Child Care Assistance, what do you see as barriers for families accessing assistance?
  - b. Do you have access to in-kind support? Describe
  - c. Do you partner with the community to fund raise to subsidize costs? Describe
4. What are your largest program/school costs? (personnel, operations, rent, other)
  - a. Estimate this greatest expense in relation to all expenses (provide a percentage)
  - b. What is your staff turn-over rate and what cost impact does this have?
5. Are there any intangible costs of operating your program/school?
  - a. For example, a director may perform duties of teacher or other staff. Intangible costs don't show up budget reports.
6. Have you encountered any regulatory or policy barriers to using financial resources?
  - a. *Self-declared/approved relatives*: Have you considered licensing? Are there barriers or supports that would help achieve this if it is a need?
7. If more funding became available, what would be your priorities for using it?
8. Are you currently able to serve all children and families in your area that request services? Explain why or why not.

- a. Are there barriers for families to access early care and education services in your area?
  - b. Are certain populations/areas underserved?
9. Do you typically have a wait list?
  - a. How many children are typically on the wait list?
  - b. On average how long does it take for a spot to become available?
  - c. Are certain age groups represented most on the wait list?
10. To meet demand in your area could you expand your current space (space may be available in your building) or would you need to create new facilities?
11. What resources or intervention services (home visitation, early intervention, other) do families that you serve most commonly access?
  - a. Are there other services that families could use, but don't have access to because of cost, availability, location, or other?
  - b. Are there other services that you would like to offer for families?
12. Is there anything else, related to your program needs or early care and education needs statewide that you'd like North Dakota policy makers to know?

### **Parent Focus Group Participant Information**

1. Please provide the zip code where you currently access or hope to access early care and education services.
2. What type(s) of providers/programs have you considered sending your child to?
  - A preschool operated by your local school district
  - Head Start
  - Early Head Start
  - Licensed child care center
  - Licensed family child care home
  - Licensed preschool
  - Licensed group child care
  - Self-declared provider, approved relative provider
  - Other <describe>
3. List your early care and education needs
  - Number of days/week
  - Number of hours/day
  - Child age(s)

## Parent Focus Group Protocol

1. What do you look for in an early care and education setting? What is most important to you?
2. Describe the early care and education options currently available to you.
3. Do the early care and education options available to you meet your needs? Please explain why or why not.
4. Are you currently on a wait list for an early care or education program/provider?
  - a. If Yes, how long have you been on the wait list?
5. How much is cost a factor in selecting an early care and education program/provider?
  - a. Are there other factors that influence your decision such as location?
6. What do you think are the barriers to accessing early care and education where you live?
7. Do/will you pay for early care and education entirely on your own or will you access state/federal supports?
  - a. Do you know about the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) that can help parents pay for child care? Do you or would you consider accessing CCAP?
  - b. If financial resources were available to pay one parent to stay home and care for their child would you consider using such funds?
8. What else would you like to share about your experiences accessing early care and education where you live?

## Early Care and Education Director/Administrator Excel Data Request

### Worksheet 1: School level costs (sample shown for ND DPI Approved Pre-K classrooms)

Column	Description of what to enter
A	School Year – for each school with a Pre-K please complete all columns for at least school year 2013-2014, and previous 2 years if possible.
B	School name
C	School zip code
D	Number of ND DPI approved Pre-K Classrooms in school
E	Square Feet per Pre-K Classroom
F	Number of Pre-K staff in school
G	Number of children enrolled in school as of Dec. 1, 2013
H- Q	Enter salary and benefit information for each position
R	Annual rent /lease cost
S	Annual utilities cost
T	Annual building Insurance
U	Annual maintenance/Repair/Cleaning
V	Annual professional development costs
W	Annual food & food prep costs
X	Annual kitchen supply costs
Y	Annual costs of education supplies (glue, paper, crafts, etc.)
Z	Annual costs of education equipment (bookshelves, rugs, tables, etc.)
AA	Annual costs for office supplies
AB	Annual costs for office equipment
AC	Annual costs of insurance (liability, accident, etc.)
AD	Annual miscellaneous costs not captured elsewhere associated with the pre K classroom operations
AE	Annual postage costs for the Pre-K classroom
AF	Annual costs to advertise the Pre-K classrooms
AG	Annual costs of any Pre-K child assessments
AH	Telephone & Internet costs for the entire building
AI	Enter any costs associated with audits of the entire building
AJ	Enter any costs for Fees/Permits to operate the entire building

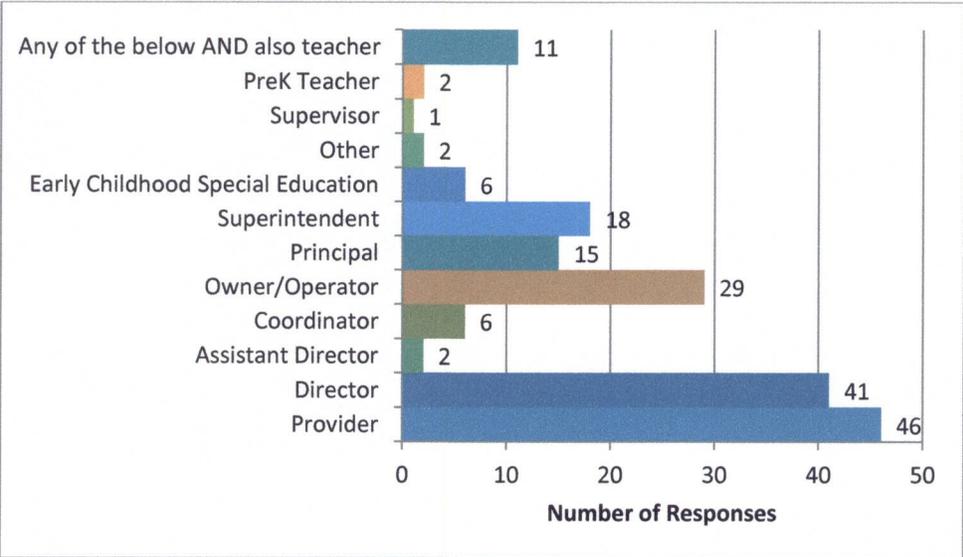
**Worksheet 2: School level characteristics (sample shown for ND DPI Approved Pre-K classrooms)**

Column(s)	Description of what to enter
<b>A</b>	enter school name where the Pre-K classroom(s) is located
<b>B</b>	enter the zip code where the classroom is located
<b>C</b>	Enter the number of Pre-K classrooms in the school
<b>D - F</b>	enter the adult:child ratio in each classroom
<b>G-I</b>	enter the group size
<b>J</b>	enter the number days the Pre-K classroom operated
<b>K</b>	number of hours per day the classroom operates
<b>L</b>	total number of children enrolled in the program as of December 1, 2013
<b>M</b>	number of children on a waitlist for each classroom
<b>N</b>	% of children qualifying for services based on income
<b>O</b>	% of bilingual or ESL children
<b>P</b>	% of children identified as special needs and/or with IEPs
<b>Q</b>	List of interventions available to children (consider a home-visiting or screening program as an example of an intervention and list all that children attending the program/ classroom have access to)
<b>R</b>	List what curriculum the Pre-K classroom uses
<b>S</b>	List what if any child/classroom assessments used
<b>T</b>	List any accreditations (for example NAEYC)
<b>U -X</b>	# of various staff in the classroom
<b>Y-Z</b>	# of teachers with various degrees in each classroom
<b>AA</b>	Years of experience of "lead" teacher in each classroom
<b>AB</b>	Do Pre-K teachers and staff have professional development opportunities, please answer yes or no. These may be in-service days, building workshops, webinars, conferences
<b>AC</b>	Do Pre K teachers receive any coaching, please answer yes or no. Coaching refers to any in-class mentoring, observation, or one-one follow-up between a teacher and coach to support instruction.
<b>AD</b>	Does the Pre-K classroom engage in any methods to engage families in partnerships, please answer yes/no. Partnerships may be parent-teacher conference or any events that invite families to the Pre-K classroom.
<b>AE</b>	Does the Pre-K classroom engage in community partnerships, please answer yes/no. Community partnerships may include having members of the community talk to children for a special occasion.

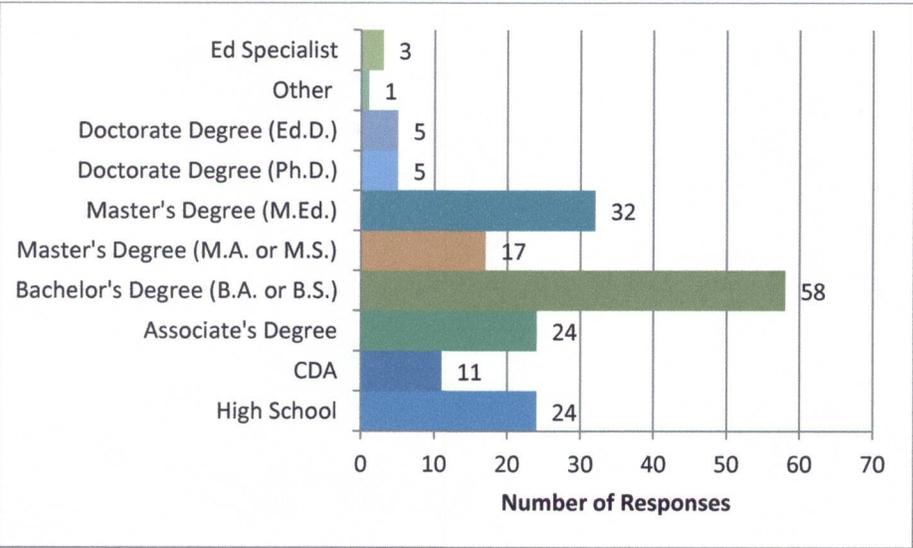
# Appendix C: North Dakota ECE Director/Administrator Survey Demographics

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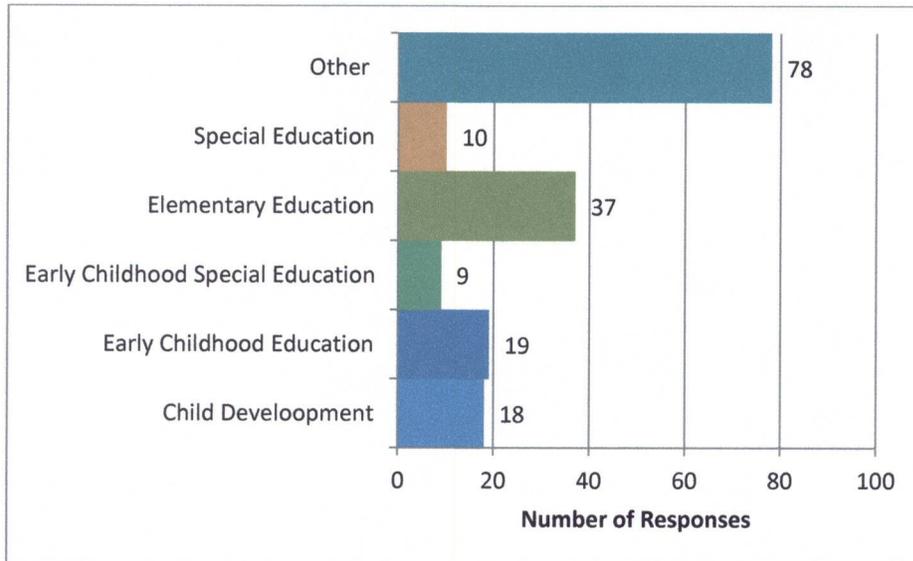
**What BEST describes your role within your early care and education setting?**



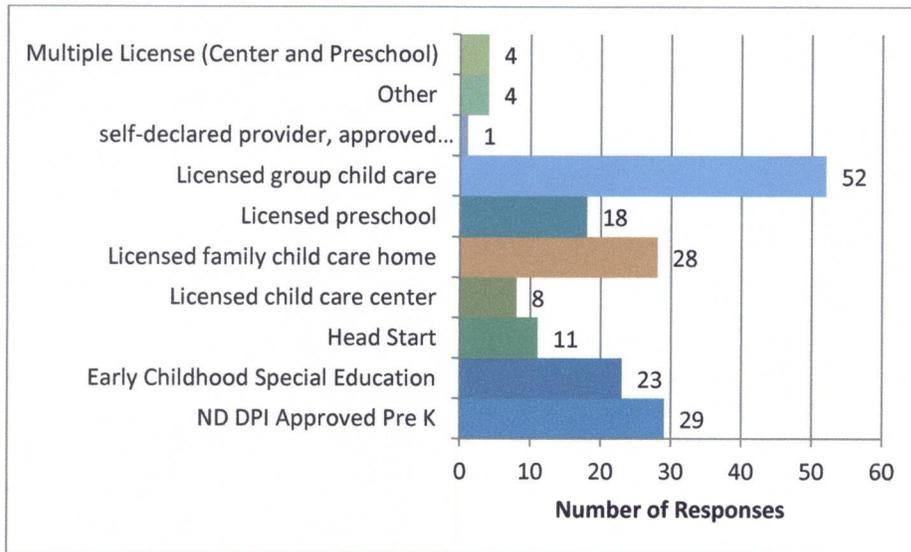
**What is your highest level of education obtained?**



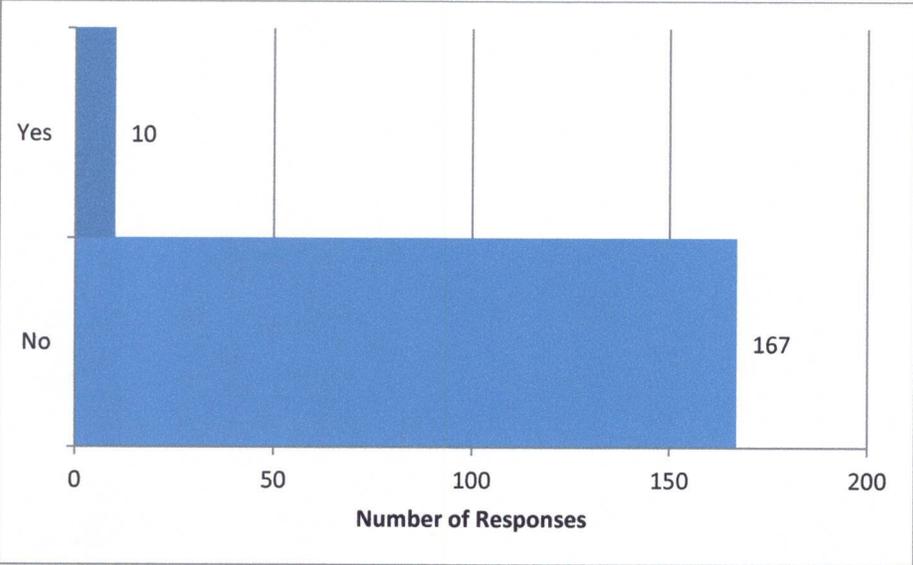
**In what general field of study is your highest level of education?**



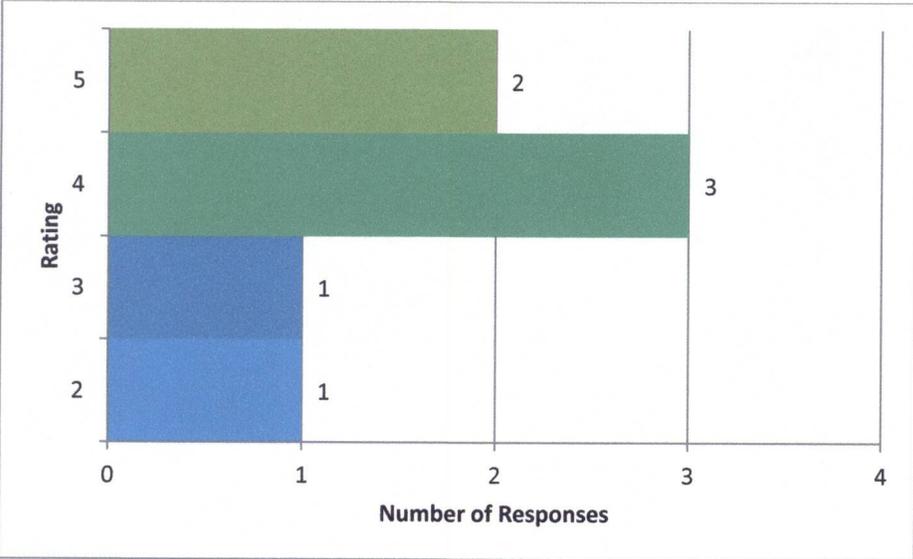
**Which describes your program/school?**



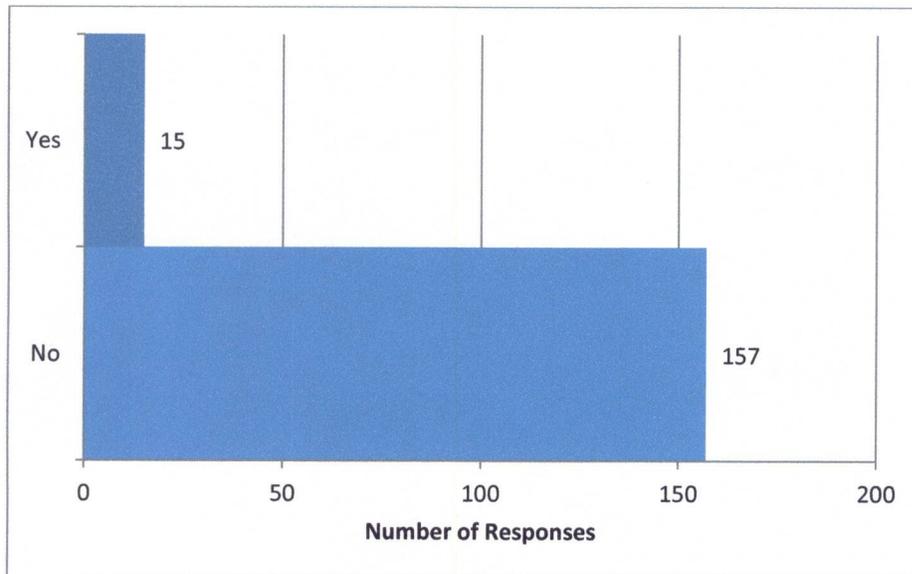
**Is your program enrolled in North Dakota Bright and Early?**



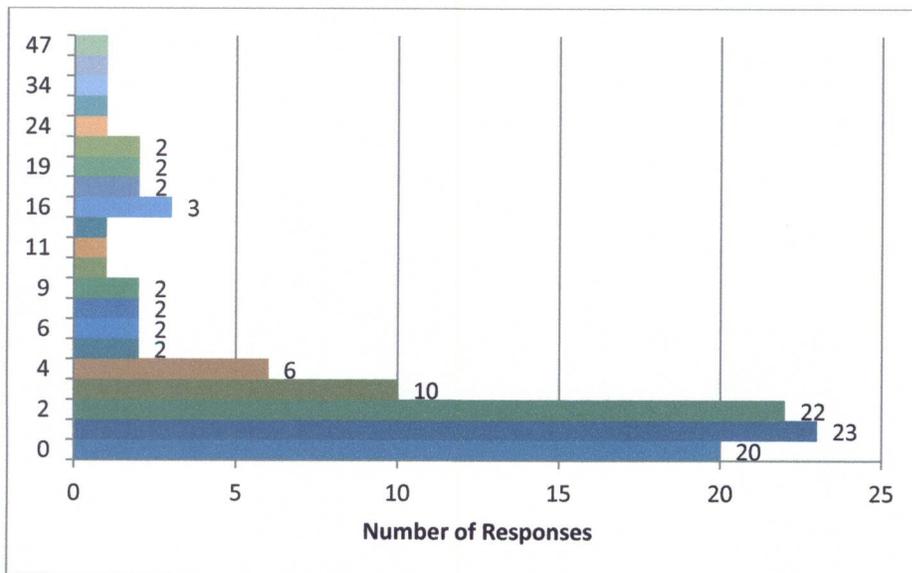
**What is your Bright and Early rating?**



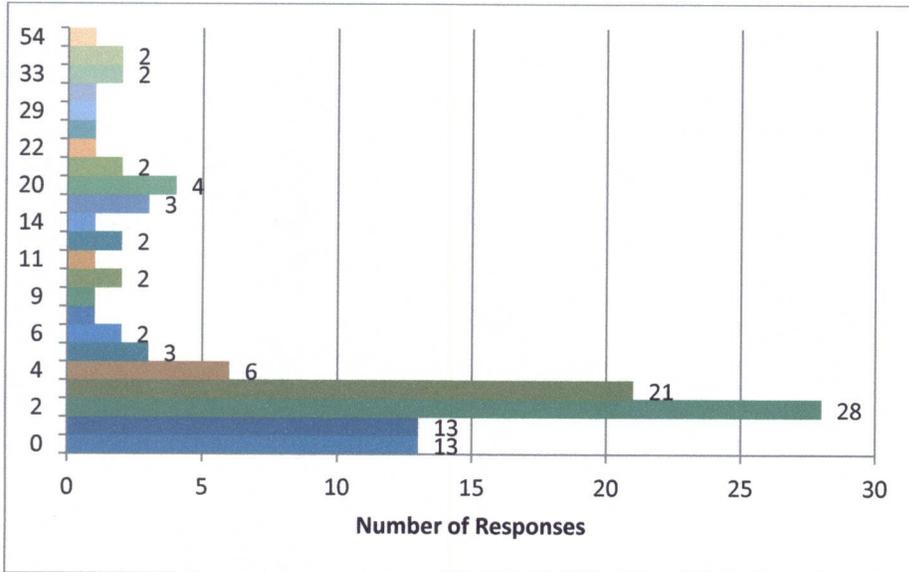
**Is your program/school currently accredited (e.g. NAEYC, NECPA, NAFCC)?**



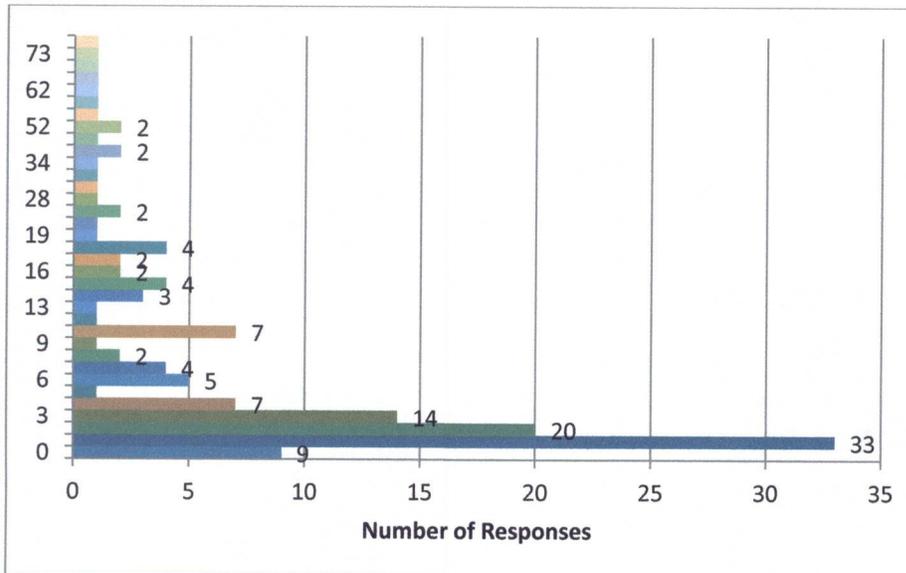
**Number of children (0 – 17 months) enrolled in your early childhood program/school as of December 1, 2013.**



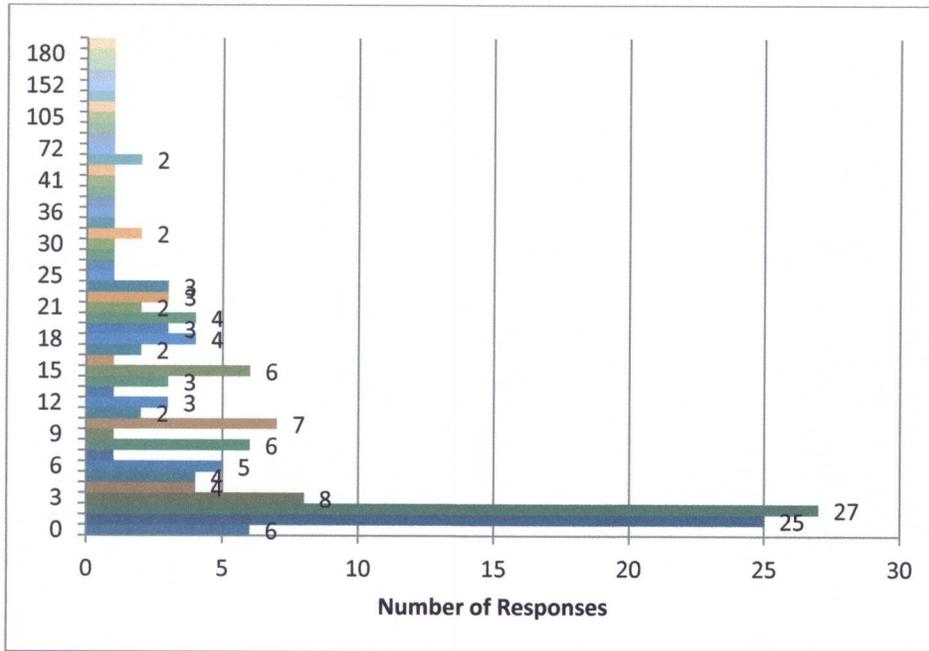
**Number of children (18 – 35 months) enrolled in your early childhood program/school as of December 1, 2013.**



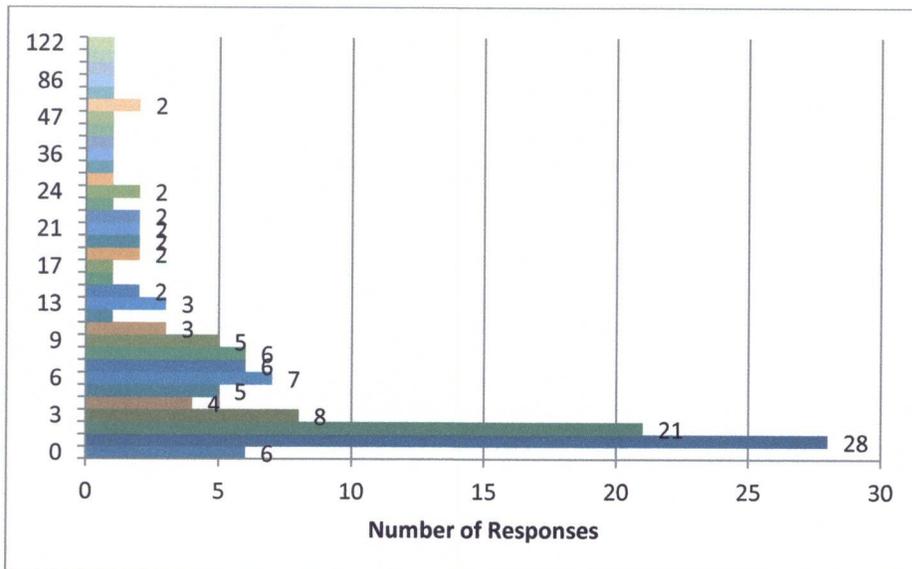
**Number of children (3 years) enrolled in your early childhood program/school as of December 1, 2013.**



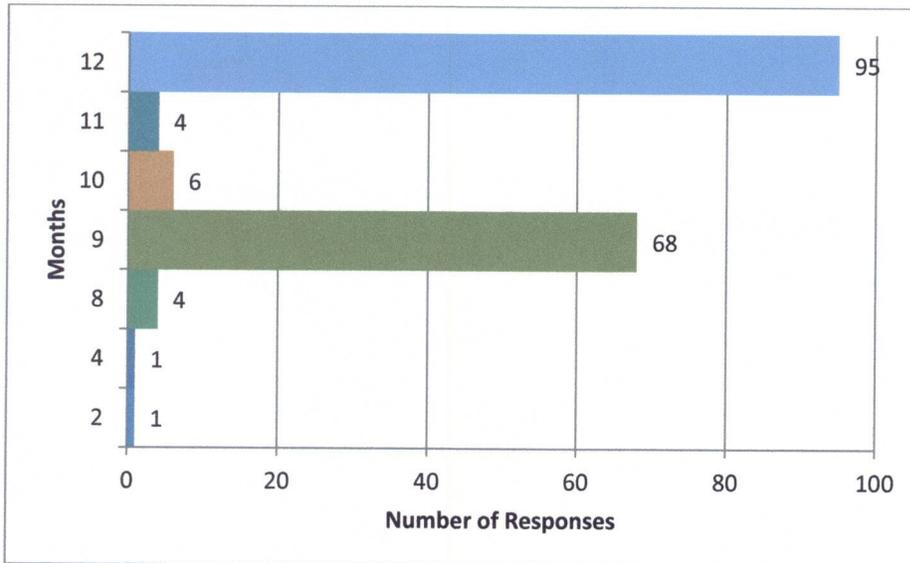
**Number of children (4 years) enrolled in your early childhood program/school as of December 1, 2013.**



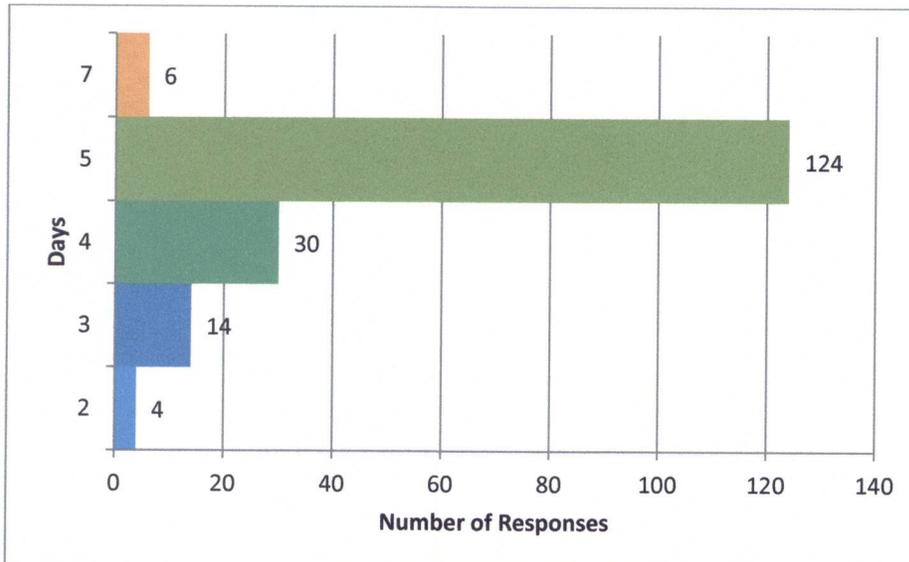
**Number of children (5 years) enrolled in your early childhood program/school as of December 1, 2013.**



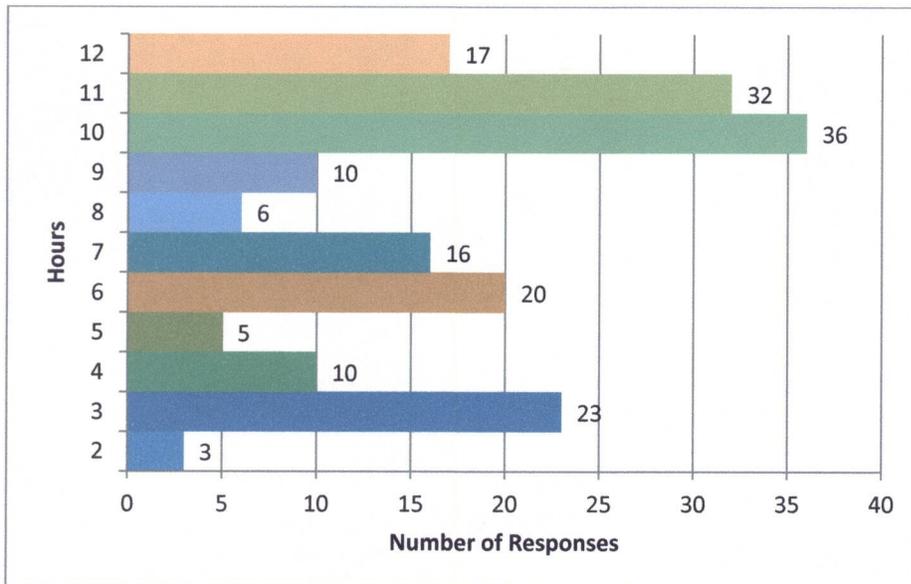
**Number of months your program/school operates each year.**



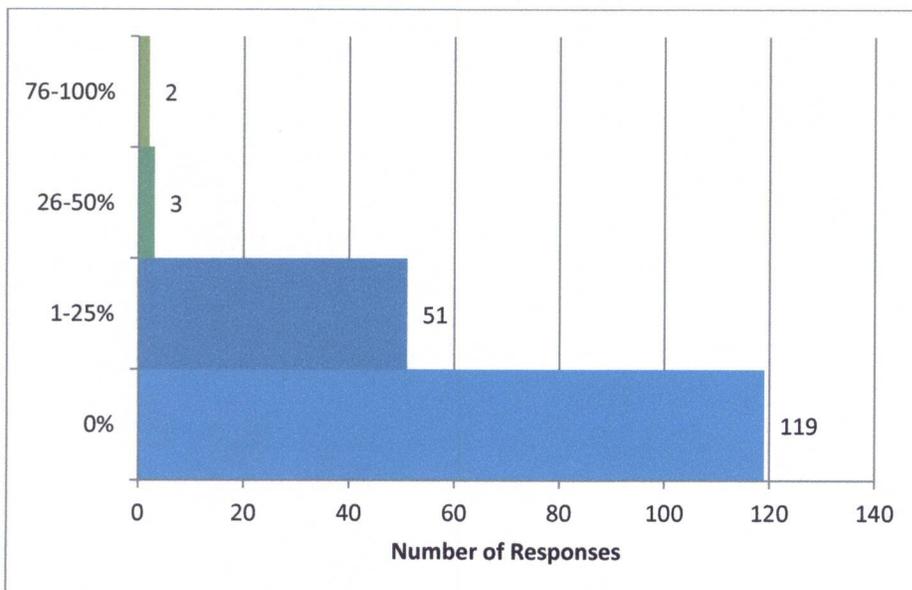
**Number of days per week your program/school operates each year.**



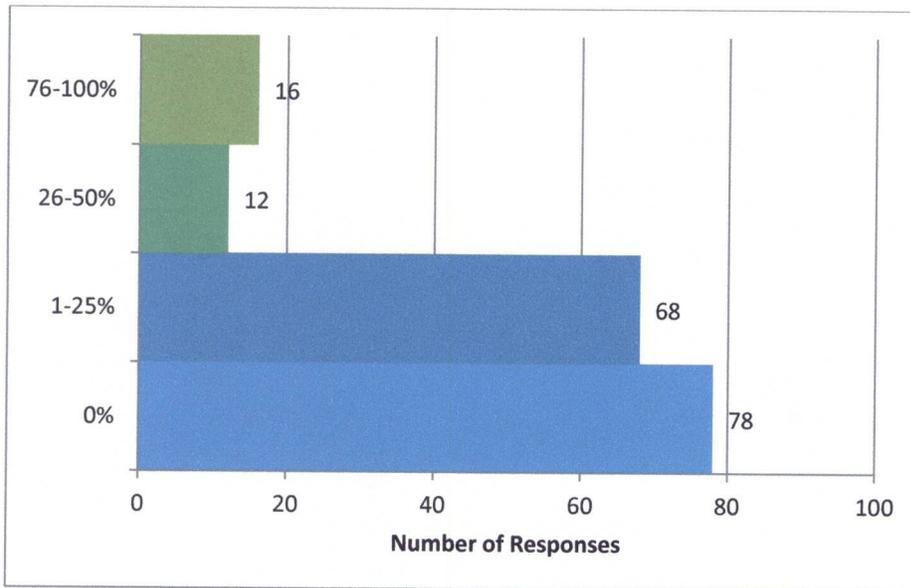
**Number of hours a day your program/school operates.**



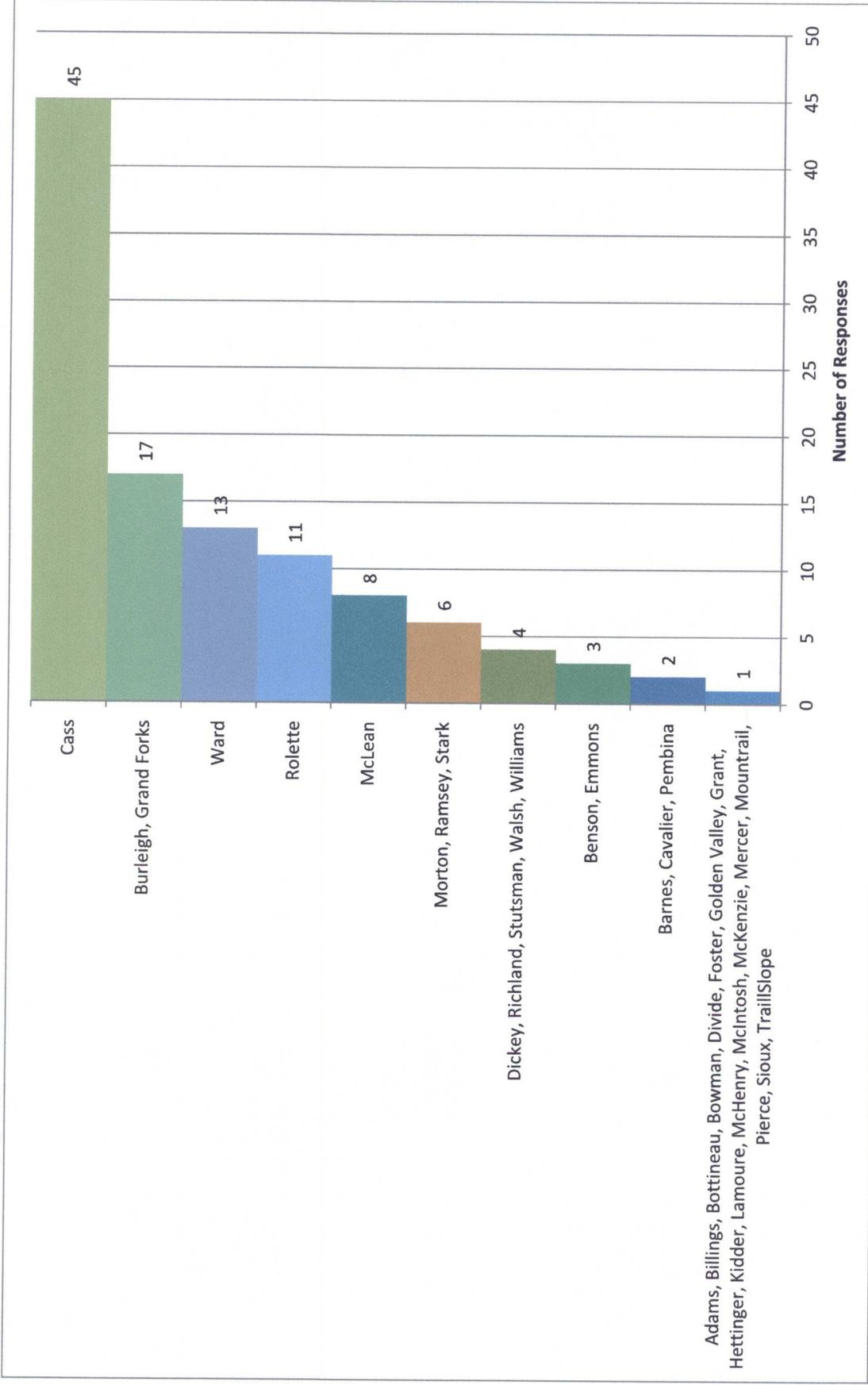
**Approximate percentage of bilingual children or children learning English as a second language in your program/school.**



**Approximate percentage of children identified as having special needs and/or with IEPs (individualized education programs) or IFSP (individualized family service plans) in your program.**

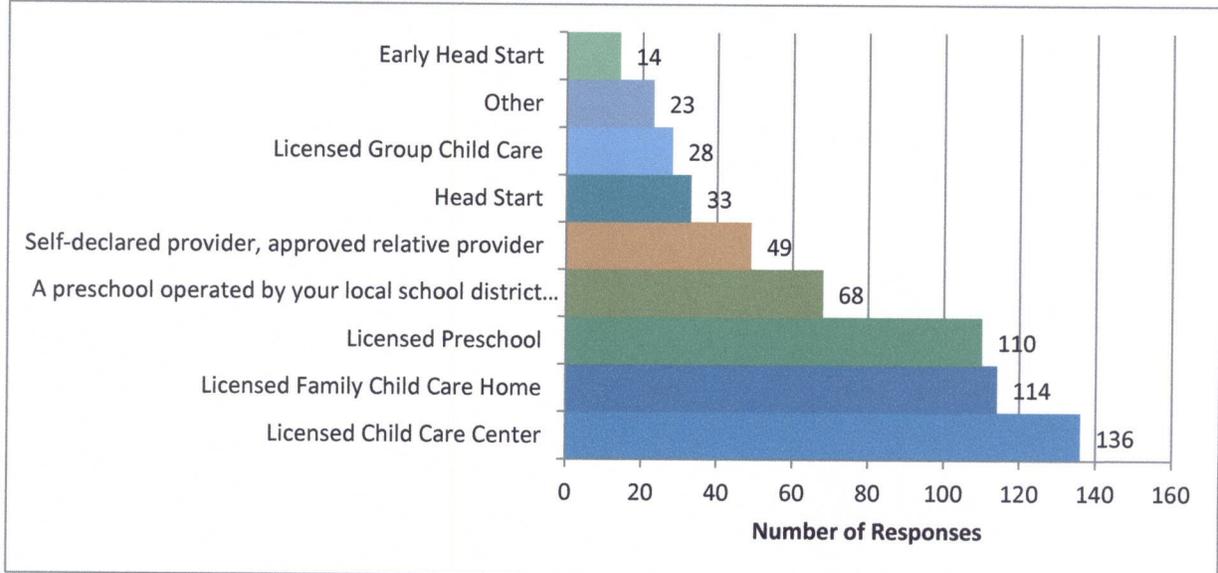


**Counties served by programs:**

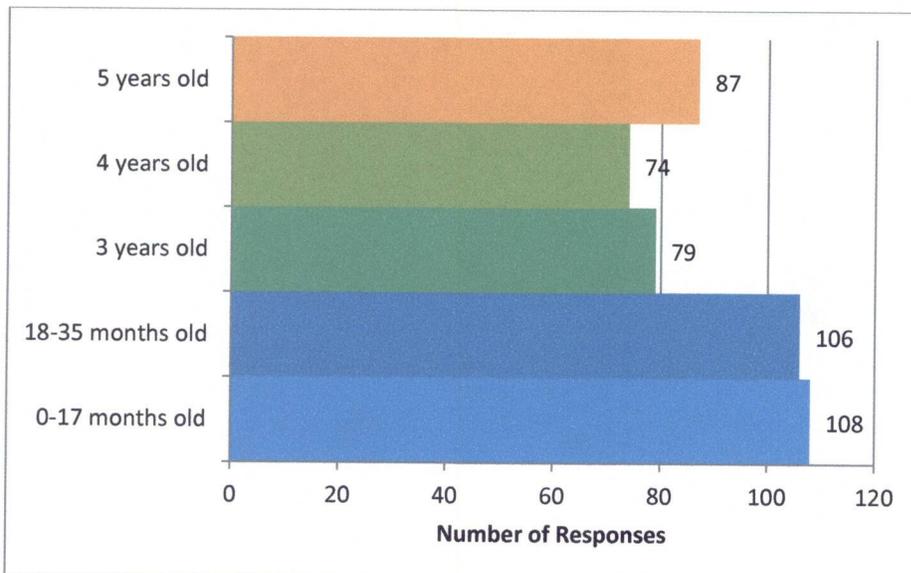


# Appendix D: North Dakota Parents of Young Children Survey Demographics

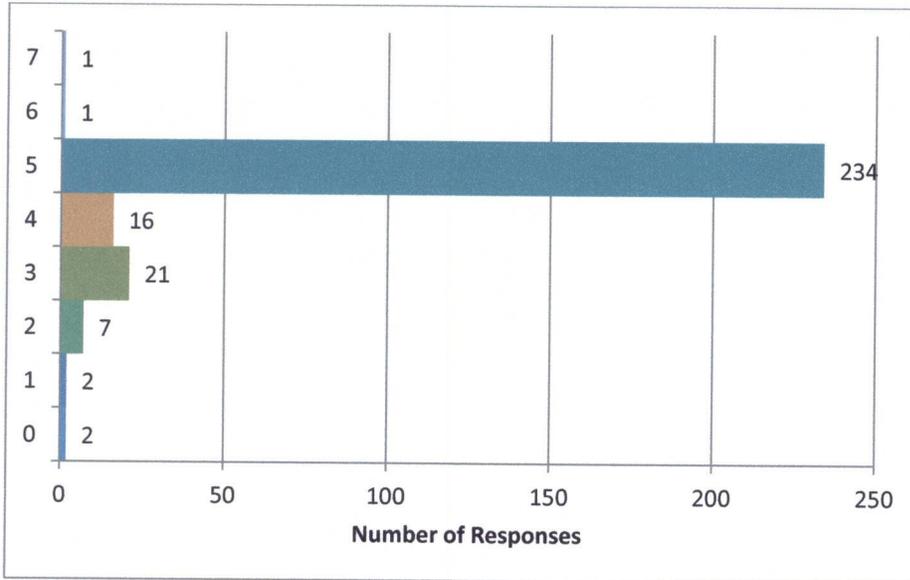
**What type(s) of providers/programs have you sent your child/children to or are considering sending your child/children to?**



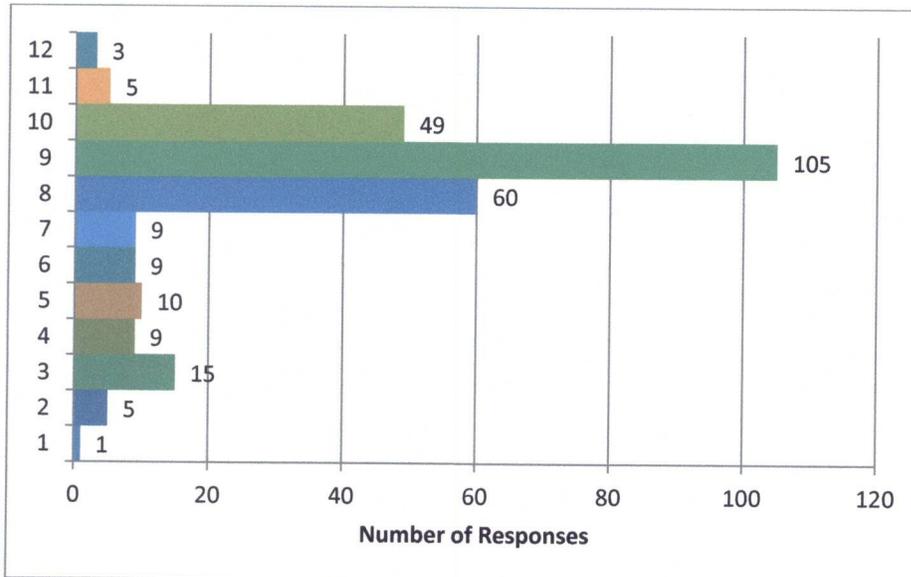
**How many children in the following age groups are you currently seeking care and education for?**



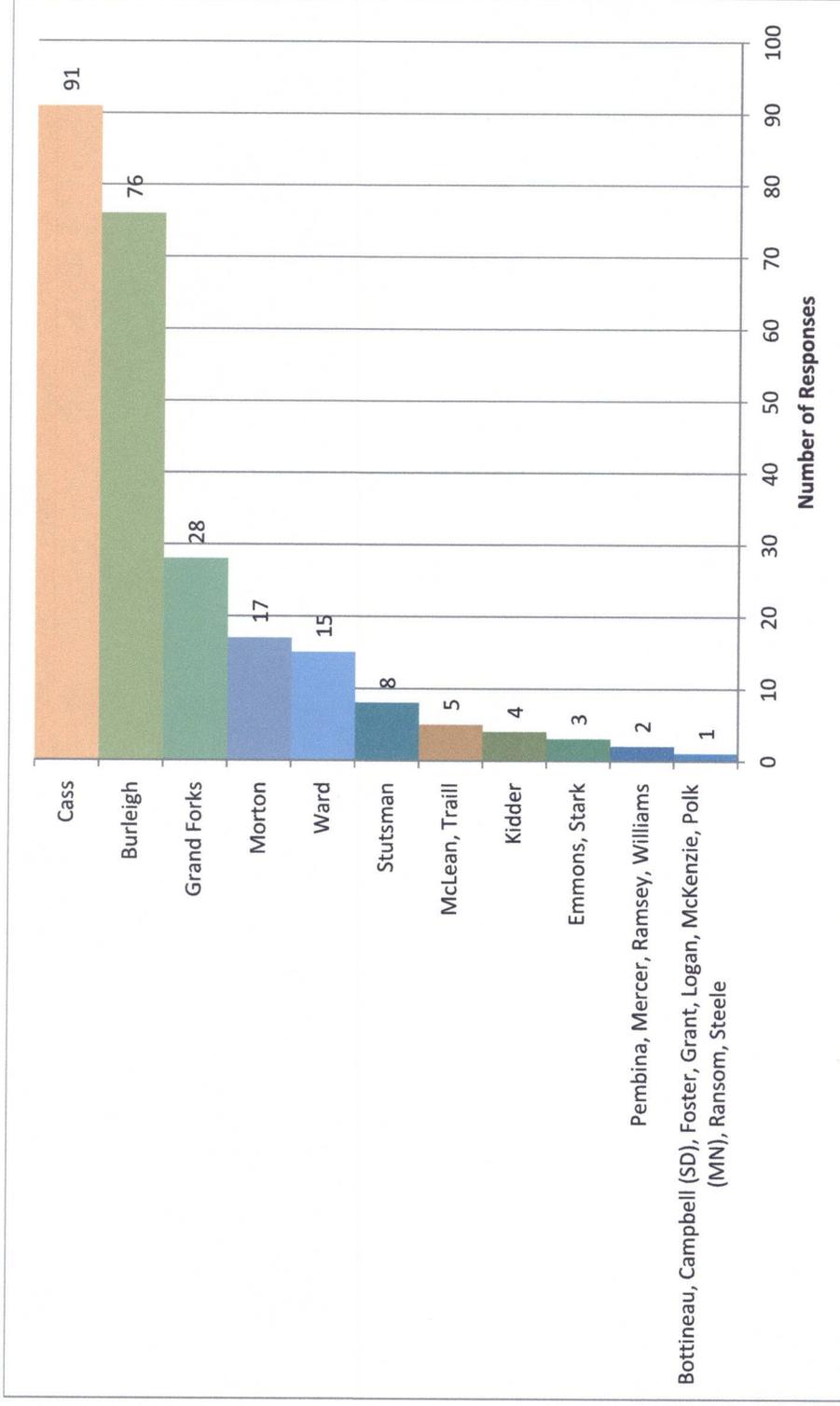
**How many days per week do you need care and education for your child or children?**



**How many hours per day do you need care and education for your child or children?**



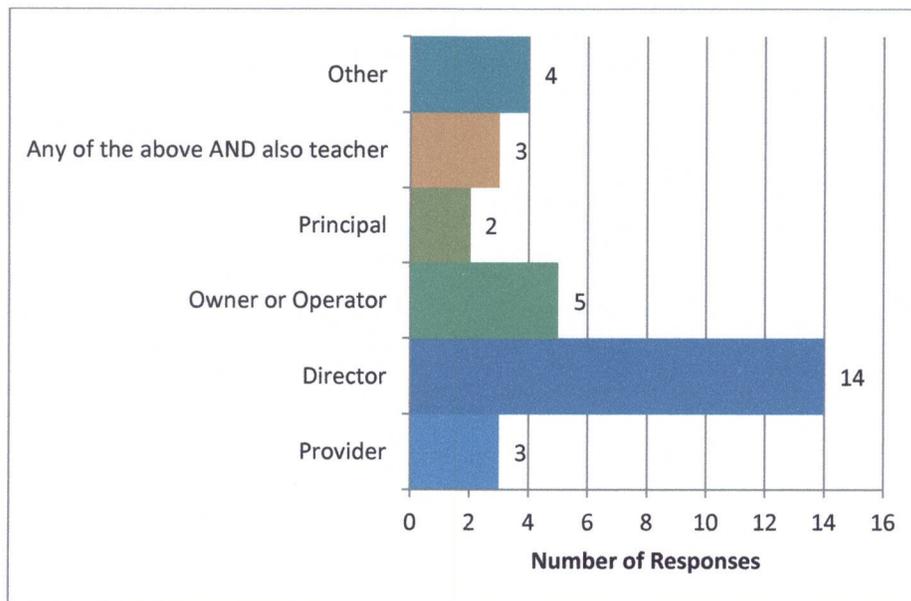
**County where hoping to access or use services:**



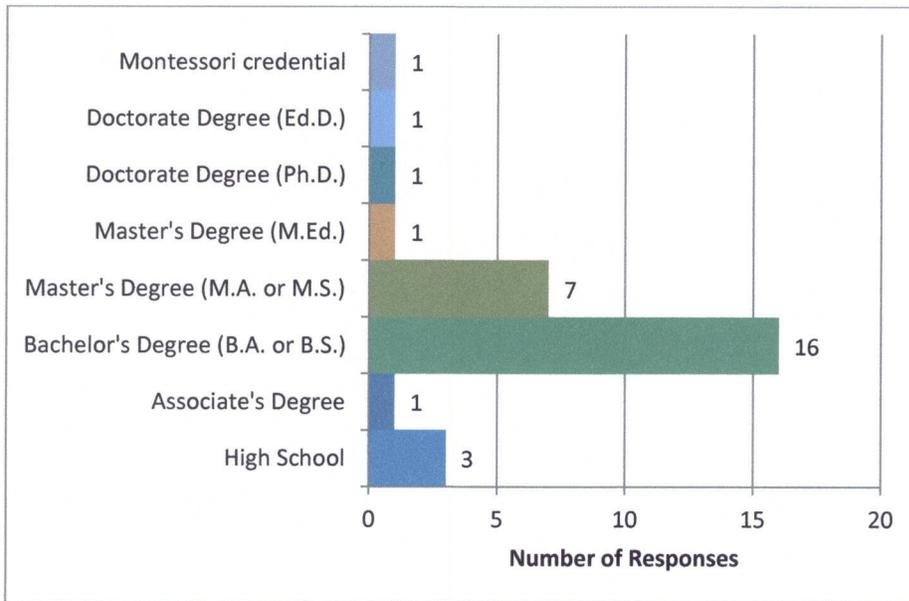
# Appendix E: North Dakota ECE Director/Administrator Focus Group Demographics

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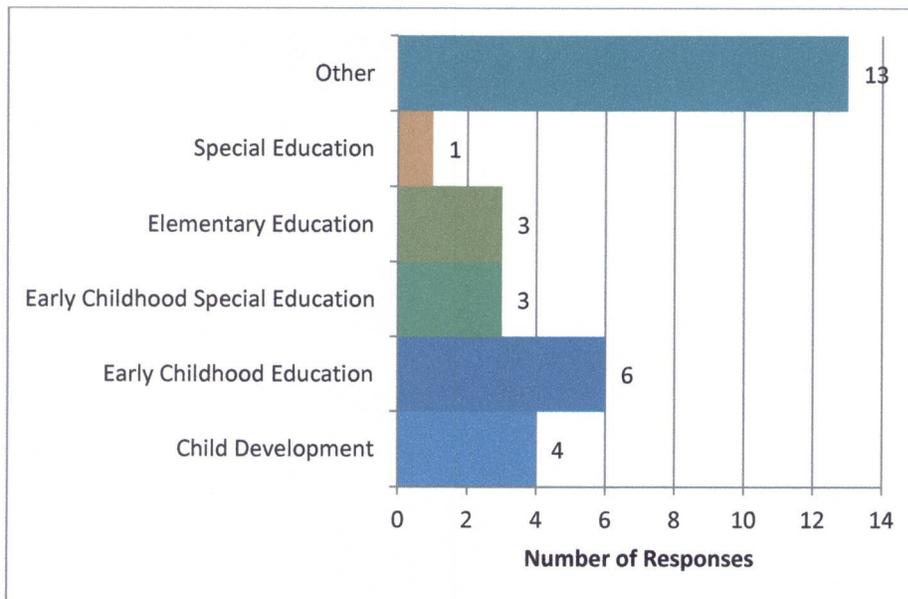
What **BEST** describes your role within your early care and education setting?



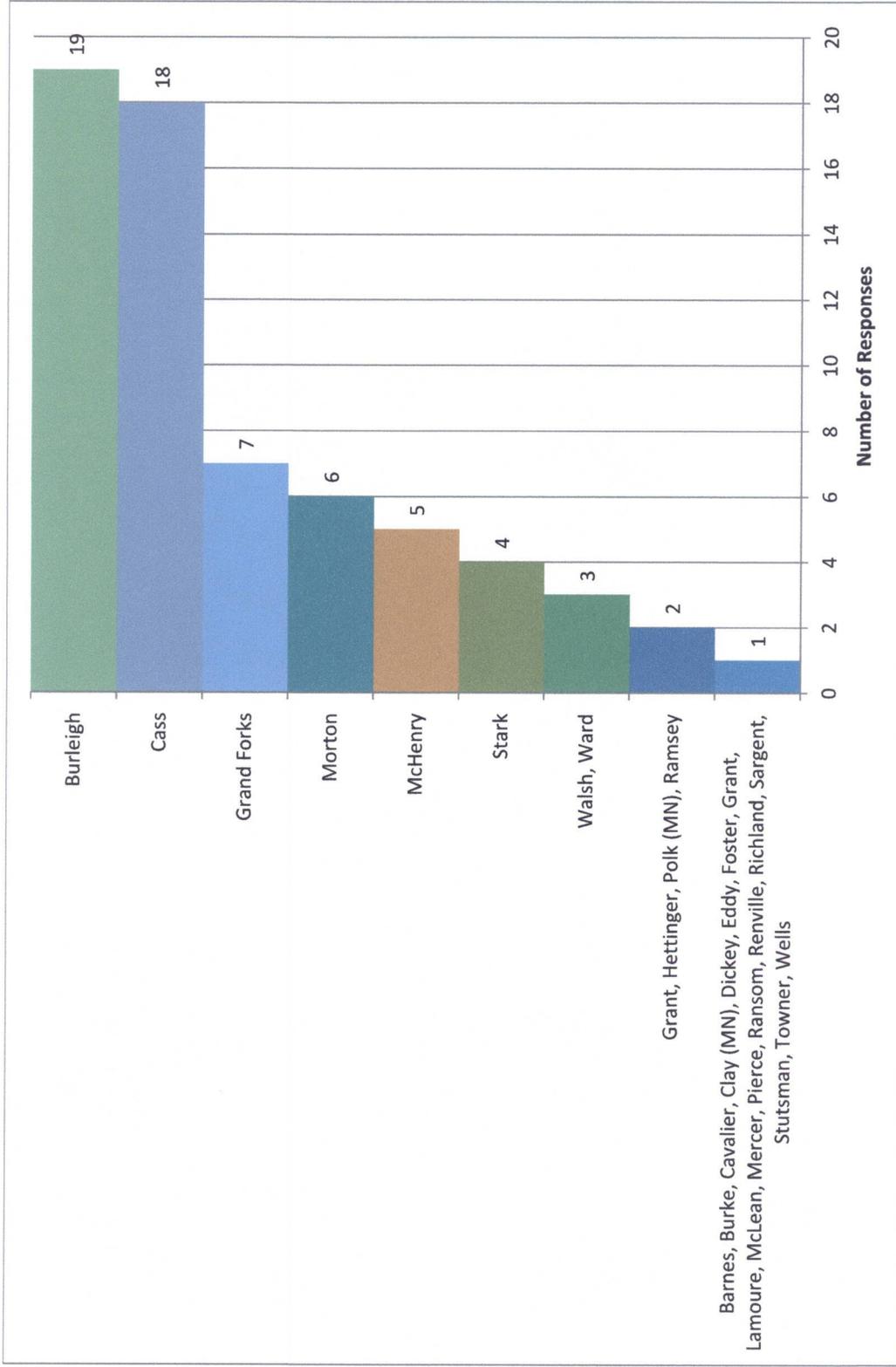
### What is your HIGHEST level of education obtained?



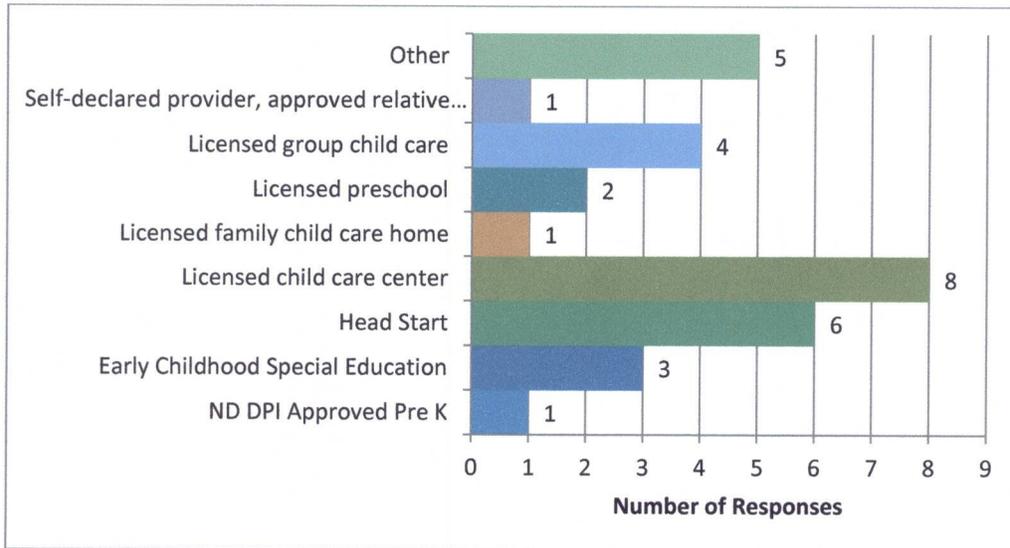
### In what general field of study is your highest level of education?



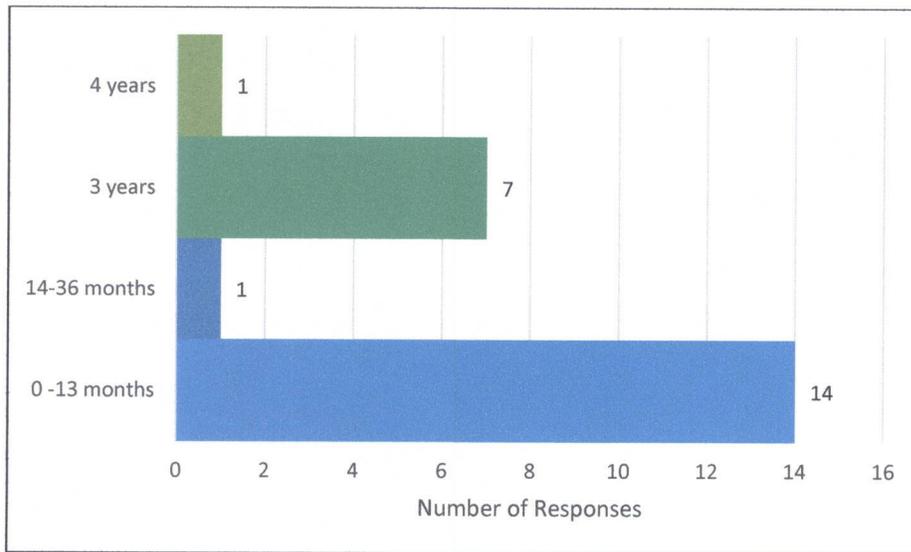
**For the purposes of helping us understand where services are located state-wide, please list all zip codes your program/school serves.**



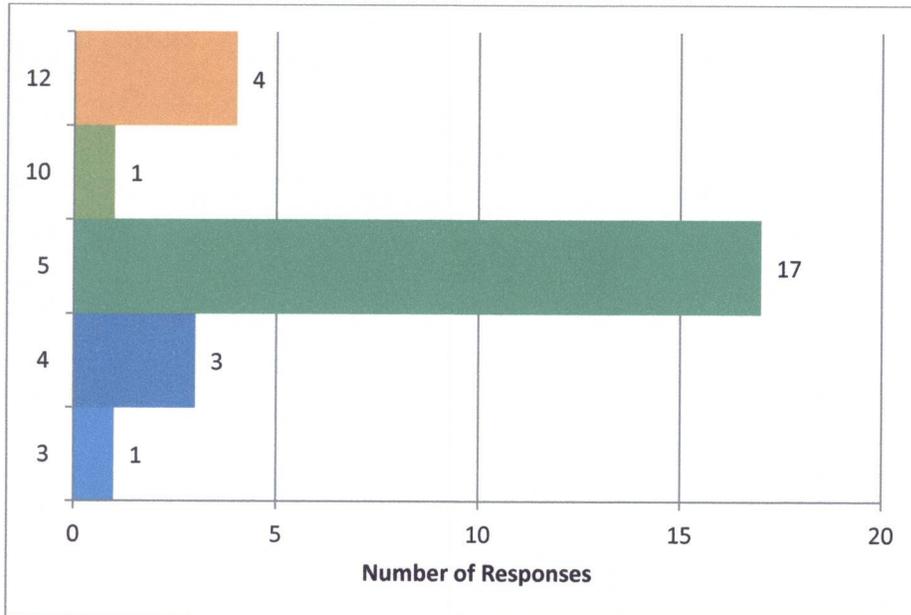
### Which describes your program/school?



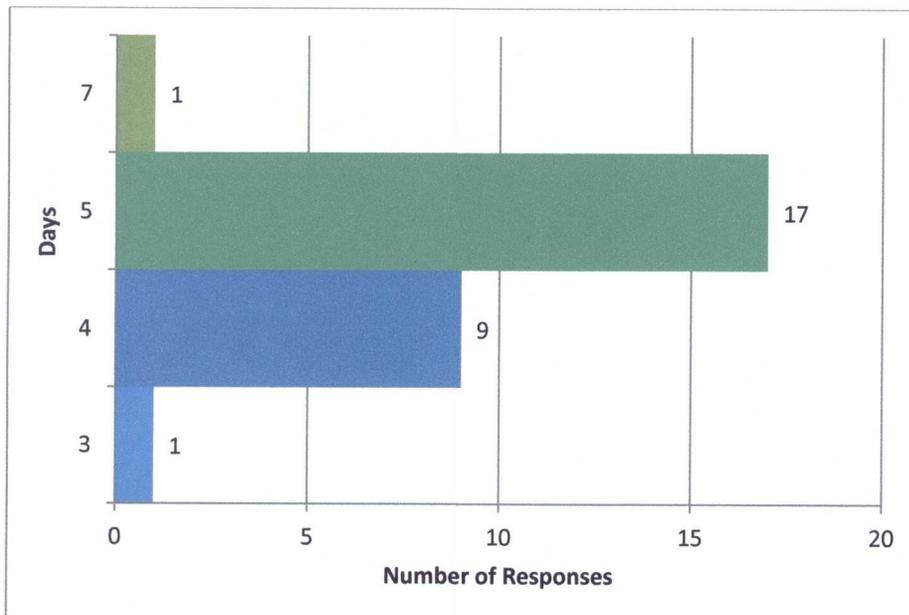
### Minimum age program/school serves.



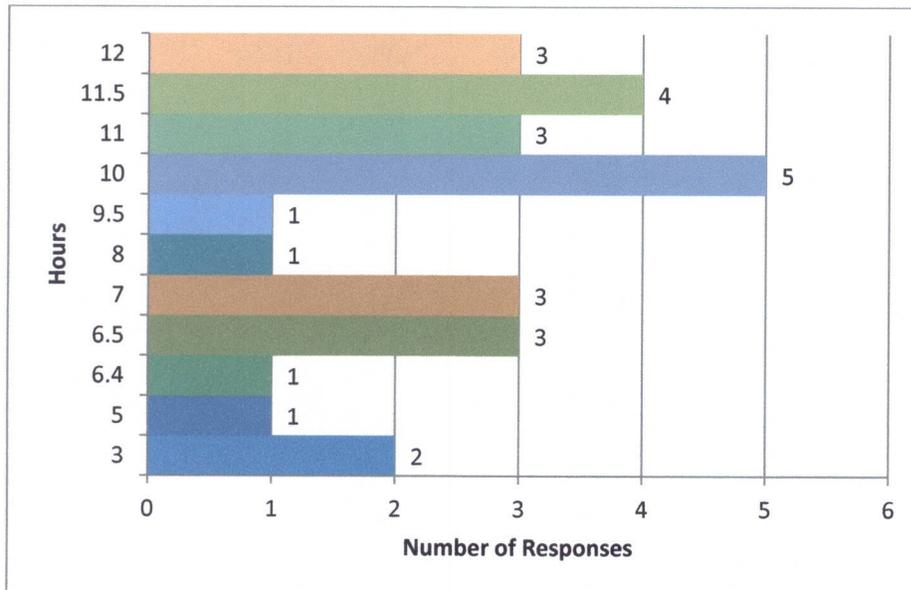
### Maximum age of enrollment.



### How many days per week does your program/school operate?



**Approximately how many hours a day does your program/school operate?**



# Appendix F: Additional Tables and Figures

**Table F1. Percent of licensed child care cost compared to median county income<sup>1</sup>**

County	% of income for infant licensed family/group setting	% of income for toddler licensed family/group setting	% of income infant licensed child care center	% of income toddler licensed child care center	% of income preschool licensed child care center
Adams	9%	9%			
Barnes	10%	9%	10%	10%	10%
Benson	20%	20%			
Billings					
Bottineau	9%	8%			
Bowman	8%	7%	11%	9%	9%
Burke	11%	10%			
Burleigh	10%	10%	12%	11%	10%
Cass	10%	10%	13%	12%	11%
Cavalier	12%	12%	13%	12%	12%
Dickey	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%
Divide			11%	11%	11%
Dunn	8%	8%			
Eddy	13%	12%	7%	7%	7%
Emmons	11%	11%			
Foster	8%	8%			
Golden Valley	14%	14%			
Grand Forks	9%	9%	14%	13%	12%
Grant	10%	10%			

<sup>1</sup> Blank cells indicate no data available on costs or specific setting is not an option in that county  
 Red cells indicate child care costs are greater than 10% median income

County	% of income for infant licensed family/group setting	% of income for toddler licensed family/group setting	% of income infant licensed child care center	% of income toddler licensed child care center	% of income preschool licensed child care center
Griggs	11%	11%	12%	12%	12%
Hettinger	11%	11%			
Kidder	14%	14%			
Lamoure	9%	9%			
Logan	9%	9%			
McHenry	11%	10%			
McIntosh	10%	10%			
McKenzie	10%	10%	13%	12%	12%
McLean	9%	9%			
Mercer	10%	10%			
Morton	9%	9%	11%	10%	10%
Mountrail	9%	9%	11%	10%	10%
Nelson	8%	8%			
Oliver	9%	9%			
Pembina	11%	10%	11%	11%	10%
Pierce	11%	11%	12%	12%	12%
Ramsey	10%	10%	12%	11%	11%
Ransom	10%	10%	12%	11%	11%
Renville	9%	9%			10%
Richland	8%	8%	10%	9%	8%
Rolette	22%	21%	23%	22%	22%
Sargent	8%	8%			
Sheridan					

County	% of income for infant licensed family/group setting	% of income for toddler licensed family/group setting	% of income infant licensed child care center	% of income toddler licensed child care center	% of income preschool licensed child care center
Sioux					
Slope					
Stark	10%	10%	14%	14%	14%
Steele	11%	10%			
Stutsman	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Towner	12%	12%	11%	11%	11%
Traill	10%	10%	12%	12%	10%
Walsh	10%	9%	12%	11%	10%
Ward	11%	11%	14%	13%	13%
Wells	7%	7%	4%	4%	4%
Williams	10%	10%	14%	14%	14%