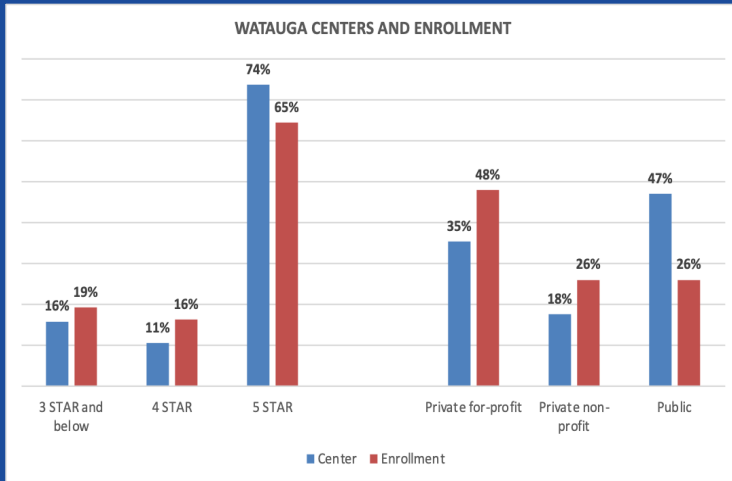
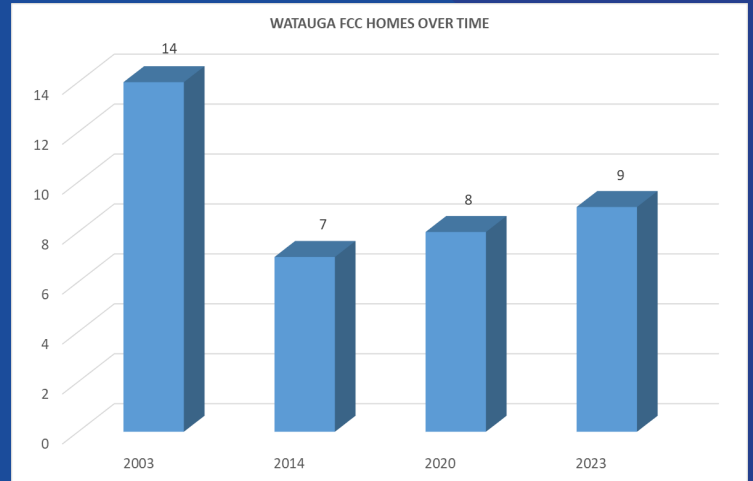


As part of the statewide 2022-23 North Carolina Early Childhood Workforce Study with funding from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, data was collected from Watauga County. This report summarizes key findings in which directors, teachers, and assistant teachers participated from Watauga County. Additional findings from family child care (FCC) providers in rural counties are also presented. In Watauga County, all of licensed centers serving children from birth to five years of age were surveyed. Surveys were returned from 63% of directors (n=12) and 21% of teachers and assistant teachers in those programs. (A total of 25 surveys were returned from the teaching staff.) Detailed information about survey methods and definitions of key terms can be found in the appendix to the 2022-23 statewide report. Totals may not equal one hundred percent due to rounding. A substantially similar county level study was conducted in 2019, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and can be found at www.childcareservices.org for further comparison data.

What does the licensed ECE landscape look like in Watauga County?



19 centers in Watauga County provided ECE to 626 birth to five year olds.



FCC Homes have been on the decline for years. Such decline has not been observed in Watauga County.

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic:

50% of centers offered remote learning during the pandemic.

10% of teaching staff reported the pandemic negatively affected their relationships with families.

What can teaching staff expect from their programs?*

Starting teachers made **\$14.03** per hour with a highest salary of **\$18.40** per hour.

*Prior to the pandemic, starting teachers made **\$18.00** per hour with a highest salary of **\$22.00** per hour in Watauga County.*

Starting assistant teachers made **\$12.00** per hour with a highest salary of **\$14.95** per hour.

*Prior to the pandemic, starting assistant teachers made **\$12.13** with a highest salary of **\$19.26** in Watauga County.*



*Numbers do not reflect inflation occurring between 2019 and 2023.

What education does the ECE workforce have?*

> **99%** of directors and **83%** of the center based teaching staff had at least an associate degree in any field. Statewide, **89%** of directors and **57%** of the teaching staff had a degree in any field.

*Prior to the pandemic, > **99%** of directors and **81%** of the center based teaching staff in Watauga County had at least an associate degree in any field.*

A degree specifically in the early childhood education field provides unique knowledge for those working with young children. In Watauga County, **81%** of directors and **51%** of the center teaching staff had a degree specifically in the field. Statewide, **61%** of directors and **42%** of the teaching staff had a degree specifically in the field.

*Prior to the pandemic, in Watauga County, **60%** of directors and **56%** of the center teaching staff had a degree specifically in the field.*

Nearly all directors and most center teaching staff had taken at least one college level course in the early childhood education field. A smaller but still significant percentage, **65%** of directors and **55%** of the teaching staff, had taken six or more courses in early childhood education.

**As of May 2023, degrees in elementary education, psychology and sociology were added to the list considered "in the field".

How much experience does the ECE workforce have?

4.6 Years

average years directors had been in their programs compared to **7.1** years statewide.

1.2 Years

average years the center teaching staff had been in their programs compared to **6.4** years statewide.

19.2 Years

average years directors had been working in the ECE field compared to **22.0** years statewide.

4.3 Years

average years the center teaching staff had been working in the ECE field compared to **10.0** years statewide.

*Prior to the pandemic, teaching staff had been working in the ECE field **4.3** average years in Watauga County.*

*Prior to the pandemic, directors had been working in the ECE field **15.0** average years in Watauga County.*

*Prior to the pandemic, directors had been working in their program **5.5** average years in Watauga County.*

38% of the teaching staff plan to leave the field in the next three years.
16% of directors plan to leave the field in the next three years.



How much can the workforce expect to make?*

On average, the ECE teaching staff made **\$14.50** per hour and directors made **\$24.76** per hour. The statewide average for the center based teaching staff was **\$14.42** per hour. The statewide average director wage was **\$21.63** per hour.

*Prior to the pandemic, the median ECE teaching staff wage was **\$12.02** per hour and directors made **\$32.69** per hour in Watauga County.*

What are the basic demographics and financial status of the center workforce?

**** This percentage is lower than expected, as the 2022-2023 was conducted in English only.*

Median director age: **44 years old.**

Median teaching staff age: **28 years old.**

90% of directors and **96%** of the teaching staff identified as female (remaining percentage identified as male, non-binary, or differently specified gender).

Directors identified as follows:

< 1.0% Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish***	< 1.0% American Indian	< 1.0% Asian/Pacific Islander	< 1.0% Black/African American	88.2% White/ Caucasian	< 1.0% Biracial/ Multiracial	11.8% Other
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Teaching staff identified as follows:

< 1.0% Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish	< 1.0% American Indian	< 1.0% Asian/Pacific Islander	< 1.0% Black/African American	> 99.0% White/ Caucasian	< 1.0% Biracial/ Multiracial	< 1.0% Other
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7% of the teaching staff had no health insurance from any source.

32% of the teaching staff received public assistance in the prior 3 years.

How does the infant-toddler workforce compare to the three to five year old workforce?

90% of the 3-5 year old teaching staff and **75%** of the infant toddler teaching staff had a degree in any field. Statewide, **65%** of the 3-5 year old teaching staff and **47%** of the infant toddler teaching staff had a degree in any field.

The 3-5 year old teaching staff averaged **2.0** years (**3.7** statewide) in their current program compared to **1.2** years (**2.2** statewide) for infant toddler teachers.

The 3-5 year old teaching staff averaged **12.0** years (**13.3** statewide) in the field compared to **3.0** years (**7.0** statewide) for the infant toddler teaching staff.

The 3-5 year old teaching staff made **\$14.42** per hour compared to **\$14.50** per hour for the infant toddler teaching staff. Statewide, the 3-5 year old teaching staff made **\$15.00** per hour compared to **\$14.00** per hour for the infant toddler teaching staff.



CHILD CARE SERVICES



Association

Family Child Care (FCC) in Communities

Rural

Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic

60% of FCC providers offered remote learning during the pandemic.



What type of care do FCC homes provide?

32% provided care on legal holidays.

95% provided evening care.

65% provided drop-in care.

52% provided overnight care.

69% accepted children who received subsidy.

30% provided weekend care.

88% participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

17% cared for sick children.

What education do FCC providers have?



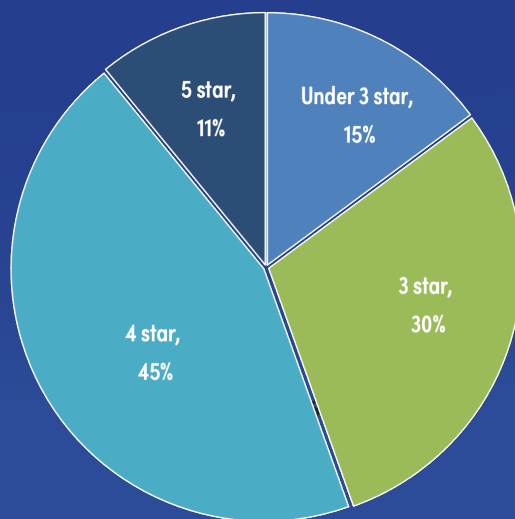
56% had at least an associate degree in any field.

Prior to the pandemic, **49%** of providers had a degree in any field.

47% had a degree in the early childhood education field.*

Statewide, **51%** of FCC providers had a degree in any field and **39%** had a degree specifically in the field.

65% of rural FCC providers have taken six or more early childhood education courses.



Rural FCC Home By Star Level

How much can FCC providers expect to make?

On average, FCC providers in rural communities worked **55 hours** per week and made **\$10.00** per hour. The statewide average for FCC was **\$10.19** per hour.

51% required families to pay for days they are sick.

61% required families to pay for vacation days.



What experience do FCC providers have?

20.0 years average running their FCC home compared to **19.9** years statewide.

22.0 years average working in the early childhood education field compared to **24.0** years statewide.

Prior to the pandemic, providers had been in the field for **22.0** years and had their FCC home for **19.3** years.

24% of FCC providers in rural communities plan to leave the field in the next 3 years.

What are the basic demographics and financial status of FCC providers?

FCC providers in rural areas average **57** years of age.

> **99%** of FCC providers identified as female (remaining percentage identified as male, non-binary or differently specified gender).

9% of FCC providers had no health insurance from any source.

FCC providers identified as follows:

0.8% Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish

< **1.0%** Asian/Pacific Islander

23.9% White/Caucasian

< **1.0%** Other

1.3% American Indian

73.9% Black/African American

< **1.0%** Biracial/Multiracial



*As of May 2023, degrees in elementary education, psychology and sociology were added to the list considered "in the field".