

NORC at the University of Chicago

Appendix S 2024 NSECE Follow-up Research Questions

Household Research Questions

Household Decision Making

1a) Which arrangements from 2024 are still in effect in 2025?

1b) What was the main reason for ending arrangements that are no longer in effect?

2) What ECE programs are families aware of in their local area, and how much do they know about program rules and the family's own eligibility?

3a) What fraction of families consider new arrangements with the start of a school year?

3b) Are households with children who become newly (potentially) eligible for programs such as Head Start or public pre-kindergarten aware of their potential eligibility and considering enrollment in those programs when available?

4) What factors contribute to how a family undertakes search and selection for their children, such as: perceptions of local supply, amount of time before a new arrangement is needed, having a feasible choice prior to starting a search, or having particularly challenging requirements for care (e.g., non-standard hours, child(ren) with special needs, language/cultural preferences, etc.)?

5) Which desired characteristics of providers are most challenging for parents to satisfy in their search activities (e.g., schedule required, geographic requirements, affordability, availability of open slots, cultural/linguistic preferences, coordination across multiple children, etc.)?

6a) What steps did families take to find affordable care, including subsidies, free care, or private

6b) Whom did they ask, what did they learn, were there programs in their communities, were families able to receive assistance, was the assistance enough for them to enroll?

6c) What was the result of their attempts to get financial assistance for care (for example, did they begin an application, did they complete it, were they eligible, could they find a provider with available space, did they enroll, are they still enrolled)?

7a) Among families who considered changing arrangements for fall 2024, what arrangements did they select?

7b) What, if any, financial assistance (including free care) are they receiving for those arrangements?

7c) If they chose not to participate in free or subsidized center-based care, why not?

8a) How do the child care search, selection and participation of families differ when they have a child whose parents report different mental, physical or behavioral health conditions or other conditions that affect how a child is cared for?

8b) How does the age of the child in the household play into the search and selection of care?

9) How often do ECE arrangements end due to experiences of suspension, or expulsion?

10) What impact does it have on the child and the family not to have care arrangements available in the summer months?

Households with Individual Paid Arrangements

1) How much do characteristics of individual paid care arrangements vary over time, such as weekly hours, payment terms, and participation in the subsidy program?

2) For arrangements that have ended, did the provider continue to provide care to other children, or is the provider no longer serving children?

3) What was the main reason that the household was using that type of care?

4a) How did the household identify the provider and initiate the arrangement to begin with?

4b) Was there initially irregular care (less than 5 hours weekly) that developed into regular care; was the provider known to the household as a provider to other households, etc.?

4c) As far as the household can report, was ECE provision a primary source of income for the provider?

4d) Does the household view the provider as having an ECE business (for example, is there a business name, are their formal arrangements such as a contract or written rules, does anyone help the provider care for children)?

5) How often did the household and provider discuss the needs of children in care or how to promote their development?

6) If the arrangement has ended, what were the main reasons for that end, and its timing?

7a) If the arrangement is still in place, has the household looked for any other ECE arrangements since 2024?

7b) What would be the main purpose of another ECE arrangement?

7c) How long does the household expect to have this provider care for children in this household?

8) Would the household suggest the individual as a potential provider for someone who does not already know the provider?

Workforce Research Questions

1a) What are the characteristics and experiences of educators who leave an ECE classroom role (i.e., changing roles within a center or leaving a center)?

1b) What are the characteristics of the settings which these workers left and to which they go?

2) What reasons do workers report for leaving their classroom roles? What center, classroom, or worker characteristics are associated with workers leaving classroom roles?

3a) Are certain center, classroom or worker characteristics more likely to be associated with workers remaining in their classroom roles?

3b) What motivates educators to stay in their current centers and in ECE?

4a) What are the employment situations (e.g., still in ECE in a director or specialist role, no longer employed in any sector, employed in a job not in ECE) of educators who leave an ECE classroom role?

4b) How many take on non-classroom roles within the same center (such as a coach or administrator)?

4c) How many educators move to other ECE settings (whether home-based or center-based)?

4d) How many educators leave the ECE sector? How many leave the labor force altogether?

5a) How do center-based workers' roles, wages, and compensation on the job in 2025 compare to wage and compensation on the job one year prior?

5b) What community, center, professional or personal characteristics are related to advancement or improvements in compensation over that period?

6a) How do wages and work conditions compare for individuals who left their 2024 center for another ECE setting (movers) relative to individuals who remained at their 2024 center (stayers), or individuals who left ECE altogether (leavers)?

6b) When individuals moved to a new ECE setting, how do the two settings compare?

6c) How are local economic conditions or policies related to individuals' likelihood of remaining in their 2024 center and role?

7a) What were the qualifications and work experience of ECE educators at the time that they entered the ECE workforce?

7b) How does this vary by individual characteristics (e.g., years of ECE experience), setting, role, and other employment characteristics?

7c) What evidence do we see of transitions across ECE settings over the course of workers' careers (e.g., in both for-profit and non-profit settings, publicly and privately funded settings, across roles, across child age groups served)?

8a) Which educators have looked for other employment recently?

8b) Are they looking for work within and/or outside of ECE sector?

8c) What are the main reasons they are looking for work?

9a) What do educators report about their job satisfaction?

9b) Do educators perceive opportunities for professional or personal advancement in ECE?

9c) What do educators report about experiencing respect or support in their roles?

- 9d) Do perceptions and experiences of job satisfaction, advancement, vary depending on individual or organizational characteristics?
- 10a) Have the personal characteristics and experiences of educators who were working in ECE in 2024 changed by 2025? (e.g., physical and mental health conditions, household composition, employment in other jobs, household income and ECE income as a fraction of household income, receipt of public assistance for ECE)
- 10b) To what extent are these characteristics and experiences related to staying in or leaving ECE sector?
- 11) How do 'leavers,' 'movers' and 'stayers' compare on these personal characteristics and experiences in 2024, and in 2025?
- 12) Do educators working in ECE settings report any impacts of worker shortages on their work activities, such as having less time to prepare for class, being less able to take time off, having less predictable schedules, or having to perform duties outside their regular job?
- 13a) Among workers remaining in the same center from one year to another, how stable are work conditions within that center, such as governance, benefits, professional development practices, etc.?
- 13b) Do individuals working with children feel that they have the skills and supports to meet children's needs?
- 13c) How much of workers' prior career trajectories are connected to ECE?
- 14) Methodologically, what different measures of turnover and retention can we calculate for centers, classrooms, and workers (i.e., movement between roles within classrooms or centers, within ECE field, out of ECE sector)?