



# Strategies Toward the Equitable Implementation of PreK in Family Child Care

## Qualifications and Compensation | Issue 1

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### Highlights

**PreK programs that are invested in including FCCs in their systems implement equitable approaches to compensation that help all ECE educators, including FCCs, to thrive:**

- Pay parity or high single-rate reimbursement
- Tiered compensation, including higher rates for priority populations served
- Wage supplements to meet livable wage standards, at minimum

**PreK programs invested in including FCC in their systems create diverse professional development opportunities, pathways, and incentives to minimize economic and social burdens on educators while enhancing quality, including:**

- Financial supports for higher education attainment
- Extending timelines for achieving degree and/or credential requirements to respond to FCC educator needs
- Differentiated and flexible professional development supports, including coaching, financial incentives, and business supports, such as substitute pools

*For a glossary of PKFCC terms (e.g. qualifications, compensation, PreK), please visit our website. [www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc](http://www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc)*

### ISSUE SERIES OVERVIEW

The PreK in Family Child Care (PKFCC) Project issue series explores strategies, successes, and challenges in the implementation of publicly-funded PreK delivery in family child care (FCC) settings in the U.S. Intentionally (re)designing PreK systems to be more inclusive, equitable, and just can pave the way for transformative change across early care and education (ECE) systems that can result in enhanced outcomes for young children and families.

Guiding principles<sup>1</sup> for mixed-delivery PreK systems that authentically include FCC programs:

1. Recognize that high-quality PreK occurs in FCC, whether it receives public funding or not
2. Value and learn from FCC strengths and assets
3. Intentionally design resources, standards, and compensation structures for the FCC context
4. Preserve continuity of care, infant and toddler care, and the broader birth-to-five system
5. Make equity and justice top priorities for FCC educators, many of whom face inequities due to racism and sexism

This series is focused on identifying how publicly-funded PreK programs include FCC in their mixed-delivery models by attending to the following areas:

- Qualifications and Compensation
- Curriculum, Assessment, and Monitoring
- Supportive Infrastructure and Professional Development
- Financing and Equity

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## Introduction

This brief report presents key findings regarding how PreK systems are addressing **qualifications and compensation** to ensure FCC settings are adequately included in their programs. Findings are based on data collected through focus groups in July 2022 with 17 state and local PreK administrators,<sup>2</sup> including those considering or recently implementing FCC in their mixed-delivery PreK systems. A key foundation for this series is that **state and local PreK administrators recognize the importance and benefit of including FCC in their PreK systems and communities to ensure equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for children and their families.**

## Key Findings on Qualifications and Compensation

PreK programs that include FCC educators generally do not differentiate qualifications and compensation. Instead, they provide targeted supports and resources, leading to some successes and challenges. Considering the strengths and vulnerabilities of FCC settings when creating or modifying existing PreK qualifications and compensation rules may be a promising approach to authentically including FCC in mixed-delivery ECE systems more broadly and in setting standards and policies that are achievable for all ECE programs regardless of auspice or setting.

**PreK programs that are invested in including FCCs in their systems implement equitable approaches to compensation that help all ECE educators, including FCCs, to thrive (see Table 1).**

States and local PreK systems may make it feasible for FCC to participate through offering a high per-child pay rate for educators, not dependent on size of program or setting, that ensures a livable wage for ECE educators. For example, Multnomah County, OR is funding its PreK slots at \$15–\$21k per child for the 2023–24 year (see Box 1).

New Mexico’s and San Francisco’s PreK programs have a tiered compensation approach for priority populations. New Mexico offers Spanish-speaking educators (most of whom are FCC educators) an additional stipend for serving Spanish-speaking

children. San Francisco offers higher compensation for educators serving priority populations, including children of color.

Training and professional development registries are another strategy for supporting equitable compensation policies. As noted by one state participant in our focus groups, having a registry provides information about the qualifications and training of the workforce, which allows PreK leaders to recognize the skillsets of their workforce and compensate them accordingly.

“It [pay parity policy] really has provided that incentive for educators to continue with their education, because now they see that they can earn a livable wage and they can stay in these programs where they love working. They love working in the smaller, either family child care or center-based programs. They don’t necessarily want to jump ship and go over to the Public Education Department, simply based on a livable wage, so that’s really been huge.”

—PreK Administrator, New Mexico

“Our application for funding is the same. We do not differentiate [funding]; I wish we would. We are on that path where those conversations are happening. We differentiate our supports through the quality support center... We just raised our rates per child, and then we allow the provider to use the funds as they best see fit because we know they’re all doing mixed revenue streams. We do have a floor though, for teachers to meet the living wage requirements that City Council passed.”

— PreK Administrator, Philadelphia, PA

**Not all states and local PreK programs have been successful in integrating FCC educators into their systems.**

When state and local PreK system policies do not account for the actual cost of operating a high-quality family child care program, low “one-rate” compensation rules can create barriers for FCC educators who provide PreK programming for one or two children compared to larger programs or schools.

Moreover, statutes and regulations written for programs being administered by school districts may have prohibitive rules and expectations that negatively impact FCC educators or may lack information about how FCC educators can participate.

“If you talk to family childcare providers, [they] will often tell you that, you know, this was written for somebody else, and they sort of overlaid it on us. And the qualifications in Maryland were really originally written for K through 12.”

—PreK Administrator, Maryland

**PreK programs invested in including FCC in their systems create diverse professional development opportunities, pathways, and incentives to minimize economic and social burdens on educators, while enhancing quality (see Figures 1 and 2).**

Some state and local PreK administrators in our focus groups report allowing tailored workforce development strategies and supports for FCC to be in place before increasing credentialing and qualifications requirements. These states and localities are exploring different ways to ensure that education and resources are not barriers for FCC participation in PreK programs

**Table 1: Compensation approaches of states, cities, and localities who participated in a focus group**

State and City PreK Programs: Focus Group Participants	Compensation Approaches				
	Pay parity for all educators	One-rate per child compensation regardless of setting	Tiered compensation by qualifications, training, and/or star level	Tiered compensation/stipend by priority population	Wage supplement to achieve living wage or above
Arizona: Quality First Scholarships		X	X**		
Maryland: Prekindergarten Program			X		
New Mexico: PreK (4s) NM Early PreK (3s)	#			X	X**
Oregon: Preschool Promise			X**		
Vermont: Universal Prekindergarten Education	X				
Washington: ECE and Assistance Program (ECEAP)	X				
Multnomah County, OR: Preschool for All	X	X*			X
Philadelphia, PA: PHLpreK		X			
San Francisco, CA: Preschool for All				X**	

# Pay parity for FCC educators with a bachelor’s degree and PreK school-based educators. ([www.ececdscholarship.org](http://www.ececdscholarship.org))

\* High one-rate compensation approach: PreK pilot site slots will be funded at \$15-21K per child/per year for 2023-24 year in this county.

\*\* For additional examples of promising state and local qualifications and compensation policies, please check out our External Resources page: [www.erikson.edu/pkfcc-external-resources](http://www.erikson.edu/pkfcc-external-resources)

*Note: Participating states/cities currently allowing but not implementing PreK in FCC, or implementing in small numbers not included in the table above: Boston, MA; Cincinnati, OH; Northampton, MA; Maine; Minnesota; Pennsylvania*

and funding. Qualifications strategies are targeted to all potential educators, but may be particularly important for FCC educators who seek to be part of PreK systems. For example, some PreK programs pay educators to get a BA degree or advanced degree in early childhood education, offer free college education (e.g., NM), or have dedicated funding provided through a tax fund (e.g., Multnomah County, OR). Other strategies include extending the degree completion timeline for PreK participation (e.g., NM) and, in some cases, granting FCC educators waivers for education requirements where necessary, aligned with their state's guidelines (e.g., Philadelphia, PA). Another strategy used to support FCC educators in obtaining required educational qualifications is offering a substitute pool for FCC educators to give them time away from their FCC programs to develop and implement their education and career plans (e.g., Multnomah County, OR). Further, all states and cities/localities

that participated in the focus groups have approved alternative teacher certification programs designed to allow educators to teach part- or full-time while completing required teacher preparation coursework.

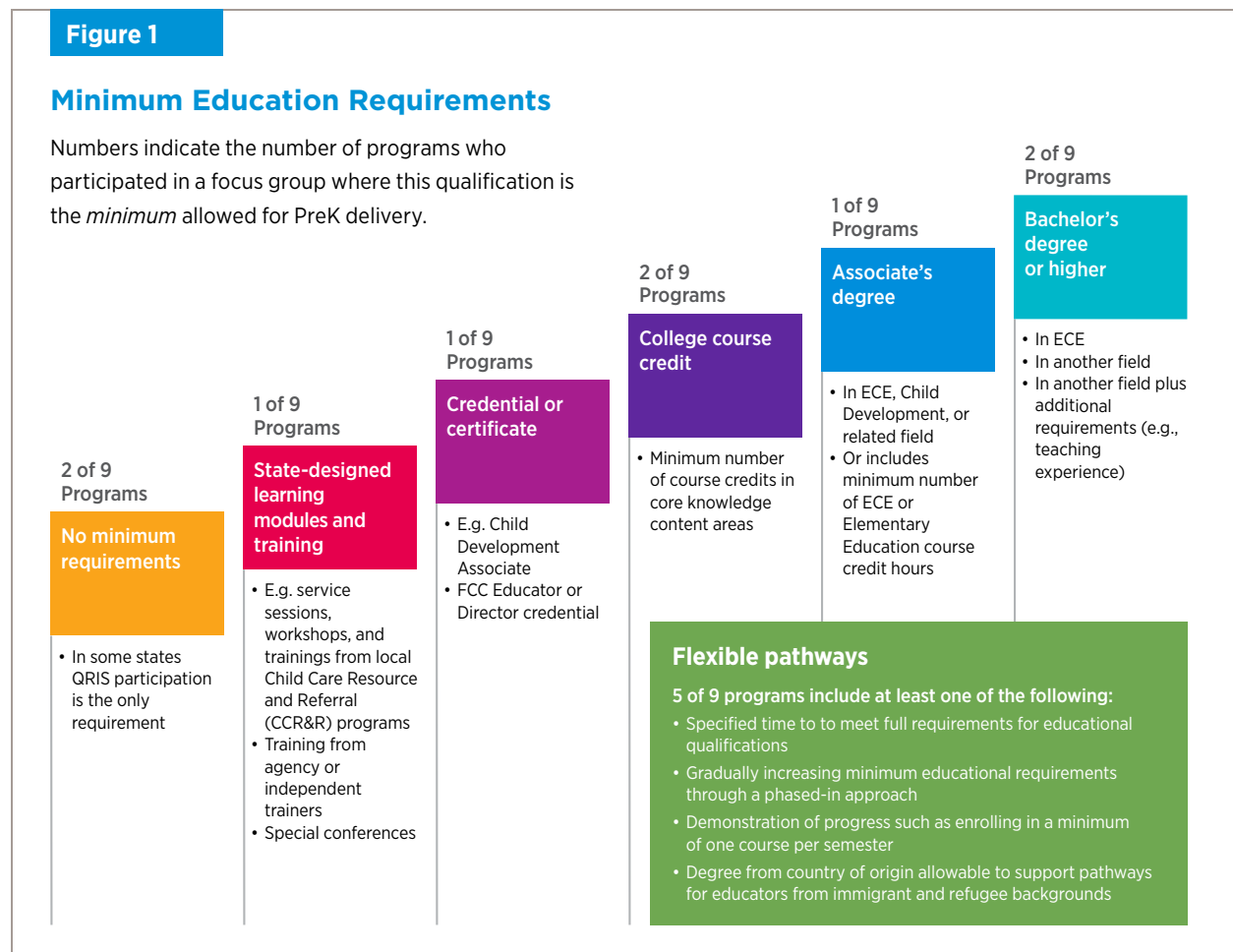
“Our minimum requirement for educators is a BA in early childhood education. However, we do recognize that this is often a challenge, especially for many of our home providers. So, our standards say they must hold the BA or be working towards it by taking coursework every semester. So, I’m really working with our scholarship program and pay parity to get folks degreed, to get them that BA, so that’s our minimum requirement. And then we do have a requirement that they are participating in our Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). So, they must be receiving consultation and participation in our star system.”

— PreK Administrator, New Mexico

**Figure 1**

### Minimum Education Requirements

Numbers indicate the number of programs who participated in a focus group where this qualification is the *minimum* allowed for PreK delivery.



“One of the goals with the pathways development is definitely using targeted universalism,<sup>3</sup> to really understand the barriers in pathways development in the past. So that we are supporting, especially with FCC, supporting where the children are in the city, and not doing sort of a blanket approach of everybody gets access. It’s really that targeted universalism to support those who are serving the children that we know need those supports in the areas of the city where it’s needed.”

—PreK Administrator, San Francisco, CA

Some state and local PreK programs have created alternative pathways that educators can take (i.e., Child Development Associate [CDA], AA degree, or community-based pathways) leading toward higher education attainment with some attention to feasibility and language of instruction (e.g., Multnomah County, OR). However, overall, responsiveness of higher education offerings to FCC educators in aspects such as relevant content (e.g., mixed ages) and modality (e.g., evening or weekend course offerings), were not mentioned by administrators in our focus groups. Some state PreK systems are aligned with state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and require a certain rating level for PreK participation. QRIS can help FCC educators obtain higher education and credentials through coaching and incentives to increase their ratings and become eligible to offer PreK.

In essence, PreK administrators are seeking diverse ways to incorporate FCC into their systems, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach may not work, but that innovating, being flexible where possible, and allowing sufficient time for the obtainment of qualifications are all important (see Figure 1). Various professional development supports are available to FCC educators seeking to attain credentials and certifications in public PreK systems across states and localities (see Figure 2).

### Promising Approaches

Some approaches to increasing the equitable inclusion of FCC educators in PreK could be considered in future (re)design efforts, including:

- Higher compensation for FCC-PreK settings that accounts for economies of scale and additional competencies that come with mixed-age care and program direction

#### Box 1

### FCC Educator Perspective: Professional Development Support

One educator from Philadelphia recalled hearing about the TEACH Grant that offered her the opportunity to complete her CDA and “Loved it. It opened up my whole educational experience to make me want to go further.” The same TEACH Program offered her additional teaching scholarships that promoted her professional development and supported her in transforming her CDA to a BA degree and later a master’s degree in ECE. When this educator heard about the TEACH scholarship, she thought “It sounded too good to be true. There was no way that somebody was going to pay me to go to college, plus give a stipend for books and for my time... It awakened a journey for knowledge in me that I didn’t even know I had.”

—FCC educator, Philadelphia, PA,<sup>4</sup>

This kind of funding is an example of how to include FCC educators who are interested in taking that leap in their careers to offer publicly-funded PreK in their homes.

Figure 2

### Professional Development Support



## Box 2

### FCC in PreK on the Ground: Multnomah County, Oregon

Recognizing the great challenges many families face in accessing affordable, high-quality early care and education, Multnomah County leadership convened and led a task force charged with creating a set of recommendations for expanding preschool<sup>5</sup> in the six cities that make up the county. The task force was comprised of leaders from the public and private sectors including those most impacted by the lack of high-quality and affordable preschool options. Critical to the task force was participation of Multnomah's Parent Accountability Council—a group dedicated to elevating the voices of parents from African American, African immigrant, Asian, Hispanic, and Tribal and Slavic communities, who served to provide the foundation for the task force's vision: **“Every child has access to a preschool that is right for them, and every family can afford it.”**<sup>6</sup> Early on, task force members recognized that a plan to extend preschool to all must also include actions that “address systemic racism, fair wages and workforce support for teachers and staff, and focus on equitable outcomes for our whole community.”<sup>7</sup> In addition to recommending that families who currently have the least access to high-quality preschool be prioritized for the first-available slots, they advanced a mixed-delivery model in which FCC educators are integral in offering child care with a range of options to meet families' needs.

“The design of our Preschool for All initiative always thought of family child care as a key strategy for us implementing universal preschool in our county.”

—Multnomah County PreK Administrator

In 2020, Multnomah County voters approved a measure to establish Preschool For All (PFA), a tuition-free preschool program funded by a personal income tax. **Ensuring that all participating providers are paid a living wage is a key component of the plan developed by the task force. To this end, in their system, lead preschool teachers are paid on par with kindergarten teachers.** Further, assistant

preschool teachers, broadly defined to include non-lead teachers, break support staff, and aides in centers and FCC homes, were given an immediate increase in pay and will continue to receive pay increases aligned to reach 135% of the minimum wage or union-negotiated cost of living adjustments in the Portland metropolitan area.

Other key components of the task force's plan center on supporting provider credentialing and professional development through the county's Preschool for All Pathways Program. **While in 10 years, Multnomah County will require lead providers/teachers to have an AA Degree in early childhood education or related field, immediate efforts are focused on providing supports and creating equity-focused pathways to achieve this end. Currently, providers are required to have earned at least a CDA credential or equivalent of Step 7 on the state's education registry.**

Workforce development strategies include providing individualized coaching, substitute staff, and scholarships for tuition and related costs. Additionally, based on feedback from contracted FCC educators and small independent centers regarding the frequency and timing of how and when payments were being distributed, the county's Preschool & Early Learning Division partnered with a non-profit to disburse funds to these providers in a timely manner and also provide customized business consultation and coaching.

“We are really trying to push the envelope around how you deliver preschool in a way that really meets the needs of families. It's going to look different, and the way it looks different is family child care. They have the flexibility and the ideas because they are already doing this work, and so we just want to support what they're doing well.”

—Multnomah County PreK Administrator



- Content and modality of higher education course offerings to ensure FCC appropriateness and accessibility.
- Successful integration of FCC into PreK systems that are broadly situated within birth-to-five ECE systems-building alignment and cohesion efforts and that take into consideration the sociocultural and historical contexts of these systems (see Box 2).
- Increased accessibility (via publicly available state/city documents/websites) to program operating guidelines and requirements, specific strategies, and available supports for FCC in PreK.<sup>8</sup>

## Methodology

PreK administrators from the 27 States and 15 cities that allow FCC to deliver public PreK, as identified in a recent report from the National Institute for Early Education Research,<sup>9</sup> were contacted via email to participate in a one-time focus group on the implementation of qualifications and compensation policies for PreK in FCC. A total of 17 administrators (82% women, 18% men) representing 9 states and 6 cities/localities participated in the focus groups. Nearly half (49%) of the focus group participants racially identified as White, 12% as Black, 16% as Latine, 18% as multi-racial, and 6% preferred not to say. Administrators had been working in their PreK system ranging from 6 months to 16 years. Most states and localities had been allowing FCCs to deliver public PreK for between 5 to 15 years, with the earliest implementers beginning in 2022. Focus group sessions lasted for 90 minutes and participants were divided into 3 groups: 1) states who are currently implementing PreK in FCC, 2) cities or localities that are currently implementing PreK in FCC, and 3) states/cities and localities who are thinking about implementation of PreK in FCC or have only implemented in a small number of FCC programs.

**Limitations.** Our focus group conversations were limited to administrators from PreK programs that allow (but don't necessarily currently include) FCC in their system and from states and localities that signed up to participate in the focus groups based on having an interest in PreK in FCC settings. Thus, the information shared cannot be generalized to PreK programs not represented in our focus groups, such as those that do not allow and exclude FCC

participation at all levels. While we note the many ways that public PreK programs are creating pathways and opportunities to include FCC, they may not look the same, given the diversity of contexts across state and local communities. Finally, the information collected was from PreK administrators and not FCC educators who may have different perspectives about the opportunities and barriers related to qualifications and compensation policies around participation in state or local PreK systems.

## Endnotes

- 1 Melvin, S.A., Bromer, J., Iruka, I.U., Hallam, R., & Hustedt, J. (2022). *A transformative vision for the authentic inclusion of family child care in mixed-delivery PreK systems*. Erikson Institute. <https://www.erikson.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/PKFCC-Conceptual-Framework-final.pdf>
- 2 Any opinions, quotes, or anecdotes shared by participants do not represent the views of their larger state/city, agency, or organization.
- 3 "Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal (Powell et. al, 2019, pg. 5)." Powell, J. A., Menendian, S., & Ake, W. (2019). *Targeted universalism: Policy & practice*. Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. [https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/targeted\\_universalism\\_primer.pdf](https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/targeted_universalism_primer.pdf)
- 4 Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC). (2022, March 24). A Dialogue with DIEEC for Family Child Care Professionals. Home-Based Child Care Team, DIEEC. <https://www.dieec.udel.edu/2022/02/11/a-dialogue-with-dieec-for-family-child-care-professionals-webinars/>
- 5 The terms preschool and PreK are used interchangeably in this context.
- 6 Multnomah County Preschool for All Plan (July 2020), p. 4. <https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/FINAL-Preschool-for-All-Plan-July-2020.pdf>
- 7 Multnomah County Preschool for All Plan (July 2020), p. 4. <https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/FINAL-Preschool-for-All-Plan-July-2020.pdf>
- 8 Pic, A., Hustedt, J., Hallam, R., Bromer, J., Melvin, S., Morgan, J.A., & Iruka, I. (2022). *Public PreK guidelines for family child care: A document review* [Brief]. Erikson Institute, University of Delaware, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- 9 Weisenfeld, G., & Frede, E. (2021). *Including family child care in state and city-funded Pre-K systems: Opportunities and challenges*. National Institute for Early Education Research.

## About the Partners

The PreK in Family Child Care project is a collaboration between Erikson Institute's Herr Research Center, University of Delaware's Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood, and University of North Carolina Frank Porter Graham's Equity Research Action Coalition.

### Home-Based Child Care Research at Erikson Institute's Herr Research Center

[www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc](http://www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc)

Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. As part of that mission, the Herr Research Center develops original scholarship and research that shapes the early childhood field. Since 2008, the Home-Based Child Care (HBCC) Research focus area has conducted rigorous and actionable research to inform early care and education policy and program design and decision-making. Through national, multi-state, and local projects and participatory approaches, Erikson's HBCC Research group partners with professionals and communities to highlight promising strategies for supporting equity for the home-based child care workforce and quality for children and families who use home-based child care.

### Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood at the University of Delaware

[www.dieec.udel.edu](http://www.dieec.udel.edu)

The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) strives to improve the quality of early care and education throughout the state of Delaware and beyond by providing exemplary professional development and program-level supports to all sectors of the early care and education community. DIEEC conducts policy-relevant research that helps to advance equity, promote the early childhood workforce, and enhance the lives of young children and their families.

### Equity Research Action Coalition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

[fpg.unc.edu/equity-research-action-coalition](http://fpg.unc.edu/equity-research-action-coalition)

The Equity Research Action Coalition, a university-based collaborative, focuses on co-constructing with practitioners and policymakers actionable research and evaluation to support the optimal development of Black children and other children of color prenatally through childhood. The Coalition works at the intersection of research, program, and practice through anti-racist and cultural wealth frameworks. The Coalition focuses on developing a science-based action framework to eradicate the impact of racism and all its consequences on the lives of Black children, families, and communities and other children and families from marginalized community, and to ensure their optimal health, wealth, and well-being.

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