

133

Total number of facilities selected

854

Total number of workers enrolled to date

\$4.6M

Total number of funds received by workers to date

“

This has made a huge impact on my home life and has made me more eager to go to work. It's helped me with basic things like my car tabs and vet bills that I didn't have to set aside my check for.

”

- Child care worker feedback on the pilot



Child Care Facilities

Application & Enrollment



Applications for the Best Starts for Kids Child Care Wage Boost Pilot opened in February 2025. After a randomized digital lottery, workers from 133 facilities were invited to participate in the pilot. The selected facilities are distributed across all nine King County council districts and include representation from all types of licensed care: child care centers, family home providers, and school age care.



1,144 Applications

1,144 facilities applied for the Pilot in February 2025. That's about 40% of all licensed facilities in King County.

133 Facilities

133 facilities were selected to participate in the Pilot

854 Workers

854 workers enrolled and received at least one wage boost to date

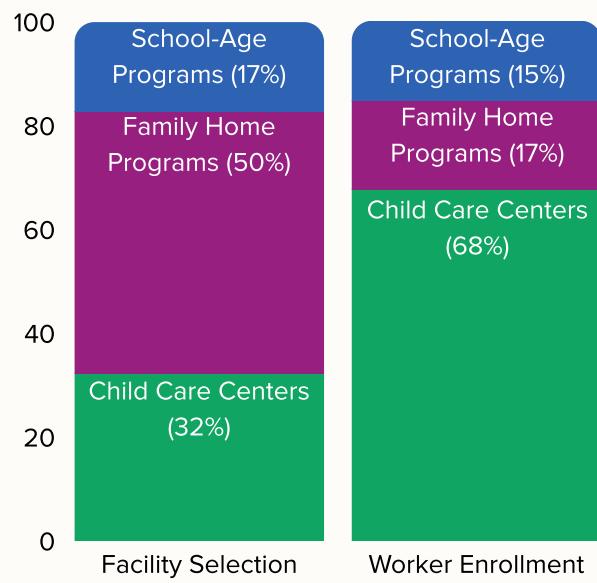
“

Beyond the financial aspect, the program sends a powerful message: that our work as early educators is valued. That recognition goes a long way in boosting morale and job satisfaction. I hope programs like this continue to grow.

- Child care worker feedback on the pilot

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Enrolled Facilities and Workers by Type of Program



Who are the Wage Boost workers?

854 child care workers from facilities across King County received a pay increase in 2025 thanks to the Best Starts for Kids Child Care Worker Wage Boost Pilot. Through 2027, the Pilot will provide quarterly wage boosts for an annual salary increase of \$8,320 for full-time workers and \$4,160 for part-time workers.

The Pilot will continue to incorporate child care facilities and enroll throughout 2025 since facilities are allowed time to fill vacancies in their positions. The number of participating facilities and enrolled workers is anticipated to rise until the Pilot is fully enrolled.



85%
female

85% of workers identify as female, followed by male (12%), nonbinary (3%), and transgender (1%). Workers also identified as gender fluid and gender queer.

78%
**less than 6 years
at current facility**

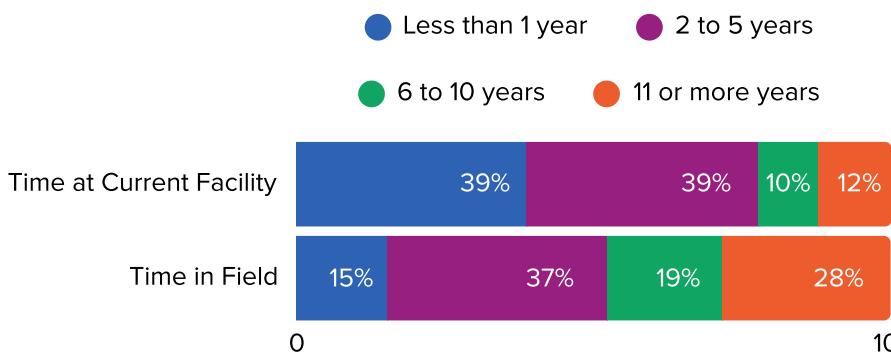
78% of workers have worked at their current facility for less than 6 years, and 22% of workers have worked at their current facility for 6 or more years.

67%
BIPOC

67% of workers identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color. 32% of workers identify as white, followed by Black (19%), Hispanic/Latino (17%), Asian (17%), and Multiracial (11%).

Experience in the Field

Years of Experience within the Child Care Field



Languages & Roles

10 languages

Workers shared preference for 10 spoken languages. 88% of workers prefer English as their preferred language, followed by Spanish (9%), Mandarin Chinese (1%), Somali (1%), and Vietnamese (1%). Workers also listed Oromo, Burmese, Farsi, Hmong, and Turkish as their primary language.

61 roles

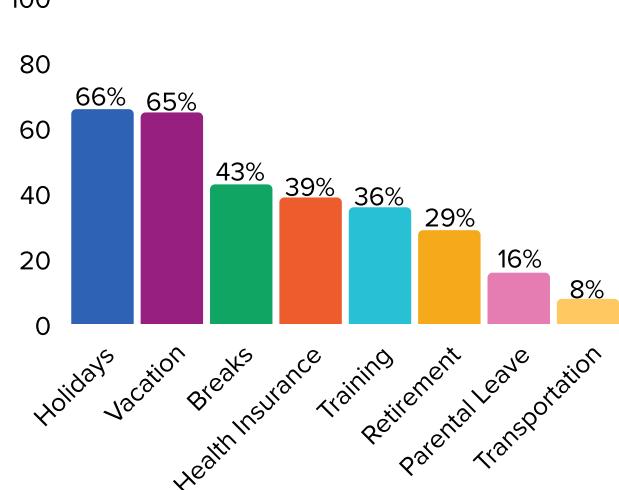
Across all workers, there are 61 unique job titles, from Teacher to Food Service to Social Work Specialist and Office Assistant. About a quarter (24%) of the workers are Center Lead Teachers, and 6% of workers are in a role outside of educator at their facility.

Employer Benefits

16% of workers reported their facility offers parental leave benefits.



Child Care Workers' Response to Employer Benefits offered at their facility



More learnings to share in late 2025



Results from the child care worker survey will be ready this fall. Follow the QR code below to learn more about the research team

- During the application period, Best Starts invited child care workers to participate in a survey to help measure and understand the ways workers feel about their jobs, financial stress, and overall well-being. About 1,100 workers responded. The Pilot plans to share the results from the survey this fall.
- Child care is essential work that requires deep expertise but remains among the lowest paid jobs in the state. Participants in the child care community workgroup continue to inform the pilot, research design, and research findings.
- Through a robust evaluation, we are studying the impact and benefit of government investment in the child care sector and the impacts on worker well-being and retention. With these learnings we intend to contribute to the evidence base of the importance of public investment in the child care sector.

